

Alaska Highway

completed in the Whitehorse area, six miles through Watson Lake, and ten miles beyond the present pavement at Mile 83 is under contract. Construction of a major structure, the Mushkwa bridge, is estimated at \$2,900,000. This is under way through the bridge replacement program. Under the program of reconstruction of substandard sections, a contract for Mile 206 to Mile 232 is under way. Approval in principle has been received for construction and paving for Mile 93 to Mile 317. This, of course, is subject to some conditions; it will be used as the basis for Department of Transport negotiations of the northern roads program, and as part of the northern roads negotiations an undertaking will be sought whereby the British Columbia government will take over and fully maintain each section of the Alaska highway as it is reconstructed and completed.

This is where the problem lies that the hon. member has exposed for the view of this House today. We are not only dealing with the government of British Columbia, we are dealing with the Yukon Territorial Council, and the Government of Canada; we are dealing with the state of Alaska and the Department of External Affairs which have reference through their contacts with the government of the United States.

When this bill was called today, Madam Speaker, it was rather interesting to see the result. It was given to me as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, but jurisdiction for this highway lies with the Department of Public Works. Naturally that caused some confusion because the Department of Transport also has interest in it. I believe the hon. member has brought forward a matter than can be considered. I think the imaginations of members of this House, not only of government members but all members, should be put to the test of finding ways of improving transportation communications in difficult situations such as this. There is no precedent under the British North America Act for this type of authority which would in essence point out that this is a highway which is essential to the good of Canada. That was not thought of when the British North America Act was drawn up.

We are dealing with a topic that is extremely sensitive. We have proposals for railway expansions that go from Prince George at the moment to Fort St. James, to Dease Lake. This will pass over the southern part of the area we are discussing. Hopefully, after preparations have been made and negotiations carried out on land claims in north-western British Columbia, it will be possible for the CNR to go forward with their linkage to a place called Suskeena which I am sure many hon. members have never heard of. It is another of the tiny places with which the hon. member for Prince George-Peace River and I are familiar.

I sometimes think if it were not for the Oblate Fathers the hon. member and I would have no place to stop when travelling to visit our constituents. There generally are no hotels, no restaurants, no gas stations and no radio stations. Most parts of the area I am discussing do not have television signals. All of these things pertain to the mid-northern part of Canada which for so many years has somehow been overlooked.

As we met with the Inuit Tapirisat today I was considerably surprised to note that many of the non-Inuit people

in the room knew a good deal about what was happening in Pangnirtung or Fort Chimo, and what was going on in the northeastern part of Labrador. The names seems to roll off the tongue very easily, but if I were to say "downtown Telegraph Creek" or Iskut, I am sure people would wonder what on earth I was talking about.

I am discussing a land that is not part of the regional economic expansion textbook in the classic sense. We are not a deprived area; we are an area of the future. In the eastern part of Canada the exploitation of resources has taken its toll and these are now depleted in some cases so the government has put in place its successful DREE program, which has augmented the possibilities of economic enhancement of those areas, but in our area this part of the process has never begun.

The Department of Regional Economic Expansion recently announced that western northlands roads would receive \$10 million for roads expansion in the area we are discussing, \$5 million to be paid in this fiscal year.

In addition to these railway expansions there are dreams which go beyond present plans, dreams which will link places I mentioned such as Dease Lake with Whitehorse, and eventually Whitehorse with parts of the south so that we can utilize our own ports. Our Port of Prince Rupert is as essential to the people of this area as it is to the city of Prince George or to Edmonton. At the moment the Department of Transport is doing a very extensive review of the Pacific rim access which will make it possible for the people of this country to have a second trans Canada highway.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. Campagnolo: That highway will be Yellowhead 16, which presently goes from Manitoba to the city of Prince Rupert.

● (1630)

I know that the glamour of the Northwest Territories has for long obscured the reality of mid-northern Canada. But we can no longer ignore the mid-north because, fortunately or unfortunately, as the case may be, we are the great storehouse of resources. It is a bank of resources which must not be extracted indiscriminately. Too often in the past they were extracted indiscriminately. The people of the area now insist on their being extracted with the greatest care. Before we can utilize them properly, a massive road and communication system must be built and an infrastructure established for the people.

There was a time in the history of British Columbia when the government of the day approached resource extraction this way: "You go in and take out the resource. If the operation is successful, you build a one-resource town, and ultimately put in the infrastructure, like schools, hospitals, recreational facilities, etc." That was the theory, but often the resource was depleted, the infrastructure did not materialize, and the town disappeared.

Now there is new hope. The people of the north are conscious of their environment. It will be to the everlasting credit of this government that it established the Berger commission. Mr. Justice Berger has done much good work in the north. The people of this country, espe-