

Proposed Vancouver-Sea Island Tunnel

Sea island. One of my main concerns in relation to this matter is the generally recognized fact that with the growth of traffic there a new crossing is going to have to be built by someone. I think it is true that the initiative should have come from the provincial government. Unfortunately, it has not come from that quarter so I think the matter has been properly raised by the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond. At the time the Oak street bridge was constructed, the city of Vancouver felt it was very badly discriminated against in the matter of sharing the cost of the approaches to the bridge. This view was expressed by the city council at that time, and they protested very strenuously to the provincial government. Representing as I do the people of Vancouver-Kingsway who will be concerned with any costs arising from a project of this nature, I want to make sure that they get a better deal than they did on the last occasion a crossing was built. I believe there have already been some studies made regarding the possibility of a crossing by C.B.A. Engineers Limited. I do not know how detailed the studies were, but I believe they concern a crossing at the foot of Granville street where we formerly had a bridge which is no longer in use. I might remark that with the growth of traffic now developing we should not be doing away with bridges already in existence.

The federal government should take this matter up at once because it is quite evident that the provincial government is not going to go ahead, as it should. As I said, along with other members taking part in this debate, while in the normal course of events it may not have been a direct responsibility of the federal government, the fact is now that the federal government is in possession of the larger part of Sea island, has huge defence establishments and this, along with the importance of Vancouver international airport, indicates it should give immediate attention to the question and see what can be done about it.

Mr. J. R. Taylor (Vancouver-Burrard): I should like to commend the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond (Mr. Drysdale) for introducing this most worth-while resolution. It is one which I feel all hon. members from the province of British Columbia should support, and its sponsor has again indicated most progressive thinking in regard to a very worthy public project. He has made it very clear that we have no direct access between the city of Vancouver and Sea island, and that we must have direct access in order to cope with the great amount of traffic now prevalent and which is expected to increase.

[Mr. Browne (Vancouver-Kingsway).]

The hon. member has pointed out that he does not want any bottleneck between the city of Vancouver and his own progressive constituency. He has long been an advocate of a more modern and up to date international terminal and has played a large part in the planning of what we all feel will be the most modern international airport in this country, if not on this continent. As he pointed out, we are about to spend \$20 million, and before the terminal is completed we may have to spend \$30 million. At the present time there is a substantial investment there in airplanes and airport works, and it does seem foolish to have this very large capital investment and at the same time have no direct access to the place where it is located.

All of us who make periodic visits to the terminal have to consider whether the bridge referred to by the hon. member will be open or not. If it is not, then there is a considerable waste of time. Leaving aside the matter as to who should pay for the tunnel or bridge, and I for one feel a tunnel would be more appropriate, the main consideration we must have is that of getting access to the area. Again leaving aside the matter of who should pay for the tunnel or bridge, I believe it would be most wise for the federal government to give consideration to the project, as suggested by the resolution.

I also hope that the co-operation of public officials in the municipality of Richmond and the city of Vancouver, together with that of the appropriate minister in Victoria, will be sought and secured.

It is common knowledge that the present day trend is towards rapid transportation. By air it is only four hours from Vancouver to Toronto, and an hour from Vancouver to Calgary. As a sidelight I may relate that on a recent trip from Vancouver to Toronto, the stewardess asked a passenger at Vancouver if she could help him off with his overcoat and he said: "No thanks, I am getting off at Winnipeg." That is an indication of how fast we now move between some of the major centres in this country.

The trend is toward speed, and at Vancouver airport we are giving consideration to the provision of larger customs facilities. We are also considering the American system of handling customs and immigration. It is a system I have advocated in this house and elsewhere. Airport passengers travelling north should be cleared through Canadian customs and immigration at Seattle. The Americans have co-operated by establishing appropriate customs and immigration stations in Vancouver for passengers travelling south. This system saves time.