

*Trans-Canada Highway*

In the formula that the minister has proposed, no consideration has been given to the difference in construction costs in various regions. I have in front of me the figures given by the minister of highways of the province of Saskatchewan in a speech he delivered in the Saskatchewan legislature last March outlining the costs of the trans-Canada highway within the different provinces. The minister pointed out that these costs were highly tentative and had arisen from consultation with the other provinces. In any case, I believe that this outline of the expenditures that construction will entail in the various provinces will demonstrate that the cost of building the trans-Canada highway will certainly not be equitable as between provinces.

For instance, the trans-Canada highway within the province of British Columbia will cost \$40 million; in Alberta, \$13 million; in Saskatchewan, \$18 million; in Manitoba, \$17 million; in Ontario, \$103 million; in Quebec, \$27 million; in New Brunswick, \$7 million; in Nova Scotia, \$36,500,000; in Prince Edward Island, \$4,700,000. On the basis of those estimates, I have divided the provincial contribution by the population in the various provinces as of 1948. I find that the per capita costs for the provinces are as follows: Nova Scotia, \$28.70; Prince Edward Island, \$25.20; British Columbia, \$18.50; Ontario, \$12; Manitoba, \$11.20; Saskatchewan, \$10.50; Alberta, \$7.60; New Brunswick, \$7 and Quebec, \$3.50. We have a range of costs as between the various provinces running from a high of \$28.70 per capita in Nova Scotia down to \$3.50 per capita in the province of Quebec. The taxpayers of Canada are going to build this highway, no matter whether the money is taken from provincial sources or federal sources. In my opinion the only way the burden can be equitably distributed is for the federal government to assume the whole of the cost.

Under this formula by means of which the federal government says it will pay 50 per cent of the cost, no consideration is given to the high cost of construction through the mountains of British Columbia or the high cost of construction in the northern portion of the province of Ontario. This formula gives no consideration to the over-all needs of each province for an adequate highway system within the province. For instance, perhaps the government of Ontario might not desire to spend millions of dollars building a trans-Canada highway through the northern portion of the province, when highways in the more densely populated areas of Ontario might be urgently needed.

In the province of Saskatchewan a large part of the trans-Canada highway will be of little service to residents of Saskatchewan as a whole. The expenditure of large sums of money by the province of Saskatchewan towards paving that section of the highway within our province could result in some other area having to go without needed highway service. In the province of Saskatchewan we would experience great difficulty in paving all of the highways. What we are hoping to do is to increase the number of miles of highway that will be graded and gravelled. By this means the farmer can get out of the mud in the summertime, and can travel on snow-free road through most of the winter. If provincial funds are tied up to a large extent in paving a road across the province, it may mean that other parts of the province will not get even a gravel road.

The 50 per cent formula does not take into consideration the total road mileage within each province. For example, the province of Manitoba, according to the Canada Year Book for 1948, has 91,354 miles of road; the province of Ontario has 73,001. There are almost 20,000 more miles of highway in the province of Manitoba than in the province of Ontario. The province of Alberta has 80,525 miles of roads, whereas the province of Quebec has only 40,329 miles. Thus the province of Alberta has twice as many miles of road as the province of Quebec. The province of Saskatchewan has 212,978 miles of road. Our province with 7 per cent of the population of Canada, has 38 per cent of the total road mileage in the country. The province of Saskatchewan has three times as many miles of road as the province of Ontario and five times as many miles of road as the province of Quebec.

When the minister presents to this house and to the provinces a formula for building the trans-Canada highway under which the federal government will pay only 50 per cent of the cost, then he fails to take into account the over-all needs of the various provinces. Some provinces may find it impossible to go ahead with the construction of the trans-Canada highway, except at the expense of other areas within the province. I wish the proposals made by the government today had been made before the general election, because some ministers took the opportunity to misrepresent the position of some of the provinces. For example, the Minister of Agriculture, as quoted by the *Leader-Post* of June 27, had this to say at Indian Head:

Refusal of the Saskatchewan C.C.F. government to pay its share of the trans-Canada highway is one of the reasons for delay in finalizing plans for its construction. Agriculture Minister Gardiner told a political meeting here Friday night.