

the hon. member from Hastings was leader of the Government, we were fighting that very same question out here.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—I know my hon. friend has always been unfavourable to the construction of the road, but that did not stand in the way of the late Government assuming the responsibility of it and entering upon its construction—at least theoretically—because so far as actual construction is concerned they did very little. My hon. friend need not exercise any undue solicitude as to the question of harbours, and all the other questions pertaining to making this road as successful and practicable as such an undertaking can be made. The reputation not only of the Government, but of Canada itself, is at stake, in the carrying out of this great undertaking to a successful issue. I have no doubt that with the engineering skill and ability, which the Government has been able to secure for the carrying out of that undertaking, everything which science and experience can bring to bear to the successful conclusion of that enterprise will be done.

I shall not anticipate any of the difficulties arising out of redistribution which my hon. friend has outlined. I am satisfied his sense of fair play, and his sense of what this Senate owes to promoting legislation of this character, will be sufficient to warrant us in anticipating a satisfactory issue upon that measure.

My hon. friend had to return to the question of highways. I did think that, if there was any question that my hon. friend would not venture upon, it would be the question of highways. I certainly had not intended to touch upon this question, and I had not included it in my notes, but now that my hon. friend has made reference to it, I should like to make some two or three observations on the subject. He expresses the greatest regret that the Government has not seen its way to promise a Highways Bill during the present session. Well, for two sessions we vainly struggled with my hon. friend to accept the Bill which was passed by the House of Commons, and with which the House of Commons had particularly to do. But my hon. friend and his associates did not see their way clear to give the country this Highways Bill. The number of constitutional difficulties which hon. gentlemen built up, as an insurmountable barrier to the passage of this Bill, still remain before the vision of my hon. friend. When a farmer is transporting his products to the market and finds himself sunk in the mud to the hubs of his wheels—anathe-

matizes my hon. friend opposite for defeating this Bill and preventing the expenditure of this amount of money in improving the highways—he will be quite satisfied when it is pointed out to him that, constitutionally this thing could not be done. I hope my hon. friend will issue an encouraging statement to the farming community, struggling against all the disadvantages of the worst roads to be found in any country, pointing out to them those constitutional difficulties which my hon. friend has built up, not only to-day but during the two preceding sessions, and but for which they would have excellent roads through the rural districts of Canada. This Bill was conceived with the idea of assisting the rural communities of Canada. My hon. friend points out that the Government of Canada could not constitutionally make this grant to the different provinces, could not constitutionally assist the provinces in improving their highways. We may throw many constitutional difficulties in the way of working out a practical question, but I say to my hon. friend, and to hon. gentlemen opposite, that notwithstanding these constitutional theories, there was nothing to prevent the passage of that Bill, and the acceptance by the different provinces of the money which was placed in the estimates, and which would have gone to every province, and have been distributed amongst the provinces pro rata. It was only through the generosity of the Government that this money was voted. True, the Government of Canada was not called upon to vote money for highways in the provinces, but the Government did recognize that the provinces of the Dominion were recreant to the duty which fell upon them, of building proper highways for the accommodation of their people, and for the transportation of their products to the centres of population. That fact stared the Government in the face, and it stares us in the face to-day. There is nothing that impresses itself so much on the minds of the public to-day as the conditions of our highways, and the inability of the municipality and local Government to grapple with this question. The present Government came in and recognizing those great abuses, which seem not to be sufficiently recognized by the municipalities, and the local governments, said, we will set aside a sum with the consent of the provinces for the purpose of improving those highways. Was that unconstitutional? Is it unconstitutional for the Government of Canada to assist the provinces of the Dominion for the purpose of carrying