

*Supply—Resources and Development*

\$90,000 for the department, and in this particular item it is almost \$21,000. Will the minister give us some idea of why there is an increase?

**Mr. Winters:** This is the item my hon. friend refers to, \$4,600 for travelling expenses as against \$2,500 last year.

**Mr. Cardiff:** Yes.

**Mr. Winters:** As I mentioned earlier, we passed the Canada Forestry Act last year which enables the government to enter into agreements with the provinces, with corporations, with individuals, or almost anyone who is interested in the conservation and development of forests. It was felt that the wider powers conferred upon the government by that act would mean more travelling, so we are asking for an increased amount of money to cover that.

Item agreed to.

## Special projects grant—

393. Trans-Canada highway division, \$300,000.

**Mr. Gillis:** I should like to ask the minister a question on this item for the purpose of clarification. I brought up the matter of the change in the specifications for the bridge across the strait of Canso on the estimates of the Minister of Labour. A member on the other side of the house, who comes from Cape Breton, made the assertion that the reason for the change in the width of the bridge from 22 to 24 feet was due to the fact that the trans-Canada highway would cross the bridge. My impression was that that change was suggested by the province of Nova Scotia, and the trans-Canada highway had nothing to do with it. It sounds rather illogical to me that the bridge would have to be the width of the highway, because that condition certainly does not prevail all across this country. Will the minister state whether the trans-Canada highway had anything to do with the change in the specifications?

**Mr. Winters:** Mr. Chairman, the agreement for the trans-Canada highway specifies a 24-foot paved surface. It was agreed that the width of the bridges would be related to the width of the highway. There is a sound argument for that, and certain changes in the specifications of this bridge were made. The statement was made officially by the Minister of Transport, and I believe at the same time by the government of the province of Nova Scotia, that the change in the design of the bridge was necessitated by the specifications agreed upon by the provinces for the trans-Canada highway.

**Mr. Cote (Matapedia-Matane):** Is the minister in a position to state why the premier

of Quebec has so far refused to concur in the building of this trans-Canada highway?

**Mr. Winters:** Mr. Chairman, the statement made by the Quebec minister of highways at the signing conference on April 24 was the last word I have had on the subject from the province of Quebec. The statement made at that time is a matter of public knowledge, and I understand that hon. members are familiar with it.

**Mr. Black (Cumberland):** I should like to know whether the province of Nova Scotia and the province of Quebec are the only two provinces that have failed to sign the agreement so far. The minister told us earlier, when announcing that an agreement had been entered into with Newfoundland, that he could not give the house the reasons for the delay in signing by the province of Nova Scotia. As I understand, the province of Nova Scotia has announced the location of the trans-Canada highway and, to that extent, has approved the agreement. I have already gone on record as not approving, to some extent, the location of the trans-Canada highway in Nova Scotia.

It would appear to me that the interests of the province would be better served if this road ran to the capital city of Halifax. We should also have as great a mileage as possible. Having that in mind, the road should run to Halifax, and should also take the shortest route to serve the province of Newfoundland. This would be along the Northumberland strait, across the Canso bridge when it is built, and down to North Sydney. This was approximately the location of the road as established during the depression in the early thirties. I cannot altogether agree with the member for Cape Breton South that a 22-foot bridge would be sufficient. The province of Nova Scotia adopted, twenty years ago or more, the twenty-four foot width for bridges. I think we are entitled to some explanation as to why the engineers adopted the twenty-two foot width for this bridge, when it was so well known and so well established that all these bridges should be the full standard width of twenty-four feet. The engineers must have had some instructions either from the minister's department or from the province of Nova Scotia to justify them in starting their plans on the basis of a twenty-two foot width rather than a twenty-four foot width. Then as to why these plans should progress as long as they did or to the extent that they did, so that it postponed the calling for tenders, so that little or no work can be done this year is something as to which I think we are entitled to some explanation.