

Trans-Canada Highway

because it gives connection with Newfoundland. We laid out one stretch of thirty-three miles running from Sydney. We adopted a 100-foot right of way, and the work was carried on largely by manual labour. We dispensed almost entirely with machinery, which gave more employment, but we were not able to do the work as cheaply as we could have if we had used machinery. We were only able to employ men in relays and provide two or three weeks' work at a time. It was not efficient help, but we did it in order to give employment to the people not only of the rural districts where the highways ran but also of the towns and cities. We established our own camps and supplied the food. Many of the people who came out from the mining towns in those days, where the mines were working one or two days a week, had not eaten a square meal for weeks. Many of them ate heartily, and their stomachs could not retain the food. Those were the conditions under which we carried on, but I believe we got a fair return for the work we did in those days in starting the trans-Canada highway.

A highway of the highest standard was continued to Halifax and to other parts of the province. I do not know what the policy of the government of Nova Scotia is today. I have glanced over the correspondence the minister has tabled, but I do not see any correspondence from the province of Nova Scotia. I am sure the government of Nova Scotia has an advanced policy. I feel greatly handicapped tonight, Mr. Speaker, in speaking to this resolution because there is no correspondence available from the government of Nova Scotia which would indicate their policy. I think it is due to us from Nova Scotia, in fact to all the members of this house, that the complete correspondence be placed in our hands so that we may know the attitude not only of the province of Nova Scotia but of every province in Canada. I am sure that is the wish of all members of the house who desire to assist in working out the best policy possible.

All work undertaken in Cape Breton at that time was not part of the trans-Canada highway. We built the Cabot trail 186 miles largely in the constituency of the member for Inverness-Richmond (Mr. Carroll). That is a great asset to the province of Nova Scotia today and I believe the whole of Canada. That was carried out by labour during those depressed days. Not only were we able to do our share of the work in Nova Scotia and keep the municipalities solvent, but we were able to pay all our own bills and finance our own undertakings. That was not the case with the western provinces. The four western provinces, with their enormous

resources and great revenues of recent years, went through a difficult period at that time resulting in the cancelling of a large portion of their expenditure during those depressed years, but we paid all our commitments.

I am going to read some of the figures I gave to the house on May 20, 1947. The treasury bill debt of the four western provinces was as follows: Manitoba, \$24,734,451.82; Saskatchewan, \$80,441,852.44; Alberta, \$26,212,000; British Columbia, \$34,112,249.99, making a total debt of \$165,500,554.25. I presume a considerable portion of those expenditures in those days went toward the building of the trans-Canada highway. The province of Nova Scotia paid every dollar of its share. The federal government has cancelled \$55,456,164 of that debt and repaid, out of the proceeds of natural resources, \$15,987,500. The province of Nova Scotia contributed to those great natural resources of the west. They got in addition a cash contribution, refunded without interest, of \$49,729,979.99; there was also refunded on a thirty-year basis with interest at 2-58 per cent the sum of \$44,326,910.19.

Mr. Carroll: May I ask the hon. gentleman a question? Did the dominion government contribute towards the construction of the road the hon. member mentioned?

Mr. Black (Cumberland): I cannot hear the question.

Mr. Carroll: Did the dominion government contribute anything towards the construction of the road the hon. member mentioned, from Sydney, through Bras d'Or lakes district to Halifax?

Mr. Black (Cumberland): Yes, the dominion government contributed 50 per cent of all expenditures on the trans-Canada highway. They also contributed a certain amount towards the improvement of other highways, towards the construction of the Cabot trail, towards railway crossing and other work. I am pointing out here that the portion payable by Nova Scotia was paid in full by the province of Nova Scotia, while in the western provinces their portion was largely forgiven. I say to the minister that special consideration should now be given to Nova Scotia for what it paid out in the building of roads in comparison with what was done in western Canada in the days of depression. I believe that equal treatment should be given to the eastern provinces. In laying out this trans-Canada highway, we should adopt a high standard because we are not only building for today, but for the next 100 or 1,000 years.

The province of Nova Scotia needs these highways for transportation purposes. We need these highways, too, to take advantage

[Mr. Black (Cumberland).]