

Trans-Canada Highway

of Alberta because there are three main possible routes by which the trans-Canada highway could proceed. Each of these associations has been doing a great deal of advertising and has obtained much publicity. Each of them makes many claims about the advantages of its own route. The Yellowhead association has even gone so far as to sponsor a convoy and send it from the city of Edmonton right through to Vancouver to show the feasibility and advantages of that route.

Alberta finds herself in the position that she cannot make a firm decision as to which route she should designate across her territory because already it is reported that the people of British Columbia have said: We will not consider any other route than the Big Bend highway leading into Calgary. On the east, it is reported that the province of Saskatchewan has said: We will select as the route the one that goes through Regina and ends up at Walsh on the Alberta border. That being the case, Alberta is in the position where, if she made a decision to put the road through over the southern proposed route or the Yellowhead route, it would throw the whole thing into such confusion that nobody would be able to make a decision for a long time.

Mr. Smith (Calgary West): Nobody would do anything that silly, would they?

Mr. Low: At any rate, thus far Mr. Manning, the head of the Alberta government, has used his head and has waited to see what leadership would come from the federal government.

Mr. Blackmore: He always uses his head.

Mr. Low: He has done so in an attempt not to confuse the matter further. In connection with the whole matter of the route, let me make this suggestion. I think it is high time that the government and the minister began to put first things first. I do not think the resolution before us begins at the beginning at all. I think the first thing that the resolution should call for is the setting up of a joint dominion-provincial highway commission; and that joint dominion-provincial highway commission ought to be charged with the responsibility of conducting a thorough survey and investigation. It should then sit down with all the facts before it, and having the advice of competent engineers it should determine what route the road should follow. When they have determined what route the road should follow then they should attempt to reach whatever agreements are necessary with the province to carry out construction and maintenance of that route. It is the only way in the world that you can bring

[Mr. Low.]

order out of chaos. Surely hon. members must agree that in a project of this size there must be order.

The second thing it seems to me the commission should do is to investigate standards, which is another most important matter. If the highway is going to be built with Canadian money and effort, then it ought to be built to a standard that is adequate not just for the next four or five years but to a standard that will hold for fifteen, twenty or twenty-five years in the future. I do not believe it would be in keeping with the dignity and standing of a country, which we are told by the government has reached the age of its majority, to have a measly two-lane road running across Canada on which you could travel with only moderate comfort that the minister spoke of today. I do not think that is at all in keeping with our standing. The road we build ought to be up to a standard commensurate with our ability to produce and deliver engineering and other services.

And now to conclude. So far as Alberta is concerned, the government there has suggested that there are three routes, any one of which will be satisfactory. They have also said they are willing to set aside money for the purpose of ensuring that we can have a satisfactory trans-Canada highway at the earliest possible time. At the last session of the legislature of that province they passed a bill providing for the expenditure of \$2 million for the purpose of getting a start on the highway. I say they have indicated their good faith, but I am satisfied they will be bitterly disappointed that the federal government has taken the view that all they can share is 50 per cent of the cost. I am satisfied that, when all the evidence is available, this government will see that if they are still unwilling to pay the full cost, the most they should expect the province to put up is 30 or 33 per cent, and the least that the federal government should pay is 66½ per cent of the cost.

Finally, I recommend to the government that a joint dominion-provincial highway commission be set up at the earliest possible moment, charged with the responsibility for taking leadership in this whole project. Someone near me suggests it should not be made up of politicians, and I agree. It should be a joint commission of competent engineers, men who know what they are doing in that particular field.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Low: I have in mind the hon. members who pounded their desk when I said that. They have indicated they do not know what they are doing.