

Trans-Canada Highway Act

the development of local roads, will do much to develop this industry in Newfoundland. It has a great potential in our province and I believe that with a more realistic approach to the building of the trans-Canada highway we can build up this industry in Newfoundland so that it will not only become important to Newfoundland as a province but also an important part of the whole industry nationally.

Of course, to build up a tourist industry we must have a means of transportation that will be satisfactory to the people who come to Newfoundland from other parts of Canada and from the United States. The trans-Canada highway will also be important to business and commercial concerns. With the highway we will have, for example, a means of having tourists in Newfoundland travel from one side of the island to the other which they are presently unable to do. We will be able to receive tourists from the mainland of Canada and from the United States and of equal importance Newfoundland people will be able to leave their island province and go to other parts of Canada and the United States.

Over the last few years motor traffic has become big business in Canada. In 1915 there were 60,000 cars and 533 trucks in Canada. By 1933 this had increased by one million. By 1948 a second million had been added and by 1952 a third million and it was estimated in 1952 that by 1960 the number of vehicles in Canada would approach a total of 4,500,000. I would think that even now this figure has been well exceeded. In 1959 Canadians in cars and trucks will travel almost 15 billion miles. The tonnage of freight by motor transport will exceed the combined tonnage carried by rail, air and water. There are over 10,000 communities in Canada that depend upon highway transportation for their existence.

Over the last three decades great advances have been made in improving motor vehicles. I believe it is not to our credit when we are able to say—and I feel we can say it with truth—that the research and development which has gone into improving motor vehicles has not gone into improving and developing the roads upon which they are to be used. It is for this reason and others that when I sat on the government side of the house I contended that the trans-Canada highway should be completely built and financed by the federal government. I still hold that view. However, I support the resolution that is before us today because it does make available to the provinces more money to carry out the work that they are to do.

In closing I should like to address my remarks to the Minister of Public Works. I think no one will deny that in his capacity

as minister of this department he has done a fine job with respect to national housing. I feel that has been done because of the energy and drive which the minister has personally put into the tackling of this problem. A good job has been done in that direction because the minister has taken national housing under his wing. I should like to suggest to him now that he attack some of the very serious problems concerning the trans-Canada highway in Newfoundland with the same degree of energy and drive and take this project under his wing.

Mr. MacLean (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Chairman, I wonder if when the minister makes his remarks he could give me the estimated cost of the Winnipeg by-pass and the date on which it is hoped that this by-pass will be completed?

(Translation):

Mr. Bourget: Mr. Chairman, I think that the only purpose of this resolution is to increase by \$100 million the amount that the federal government may give the provinces towards construction of the trans-Canada highway.

As mentioned, that legislation was introduced in 1949 by the previous government. Had it not been for the last war, that construction would certainly have started before 1949, because long before then everybody agreed that that highway was most necessary not only to provide employment, but more especially for other reasons that are important in the life of a nation. Indeed the trans-Canada highway—and this is perhaps better realized now, will bring the provinces closer, promote the tourist industry, step up inter-provincial trade, help develop Canadian business, industries and natural resources and, finally, in wartime, could be used by our forces and for the evacuation of our cities if need be.

According to estimates made in 1949, the highway should have been completed by 1956. However, because of the Korean war, shortage of equipment at different times, and topographical difficulties, especially on the stretches crossing British Columbia and Northern Ontario, and also because of bad weather and perhaps because the provinces had more important projects in hand, it has been impossible to complete that highway at the set date, that is at the end of 1956. That is why, in 1956, the government introduced certain amendments into the act adopted in 1949. Those amendments were as follows: the original amount which, at first, had been set at \$150 million, was increased by \$100 million.