

information here as to any particular highway. My officials should have it here at my disposal, but I have not got it. Now, what I propose doing is this: At the next sitting I will have before me a statement showing each and every contract, or agreement, that we have entered into with every province. That is what I should have had here to-night, but unfortunately, my officials came unprovided with it. In the meantime I am going to ask that this item stand, and when we take it up again I shall have full details with respect to every one of these agreements. Then I hope to be able to afford such information as the hon. member asks for. For that reason I would ask that this vote stand and that we proceed with the next item.

Mr. SEXSMITH: I am glad the minister has agreed to let the item stand. If we are going to vote money for highways we should have full information with respect to the proposed expenditure and some concerted plan should be agreed upon.

An hon. MEMBER: Yes, a Conservative plan.

Mr. SEXSMITH: A well thought out and comprehensive policy should be adopted, instead of having two or three men going out and building speedways from Windsor to Halifax. Of course, if that is what the Dominion and provincial governments contemplate, as being in the best interests of Canada, I am not going to do any more than enter my protest; but if we are going to enter upon the expenditure of millions of dollars on highways we should be informed where the money will be spent, how it will be spent, and how much the expenditure per mile on each of these roads will be.

Mr. CASGRAIN: In the year 1912 or 1913, under the previous administration, the attempt was made to pass a certain highway law, but it was blocked in the Senate, the view of the Opposition at that time being that it was a purely patronage measure, and that the Government would try to use it in order to influence the electorate at the ensuing elections. The present law, which was passed in 1918, is not framed quite along the same lines, but it provides for the granting of subsidies in aid of such highways as the provinces wish to improve. I respectfully submit that if the Government is of opinion the roads in the different provinces need improving, the grants in aid of those roads should not be given in this round-about way, but in the form of an increase of subsidy to the

[Mr. J. D. Reid.]

provinces. I submit that by the present policy the Government is simply trying to maintain a hold on the provinces which receive grants and that sooner or later—we may see it sooner rather than later—it will endeavour to influence or direct these governments. I ask what better authority could undertake the improvement of provincial highways than the provincial department organized for that purpose? That is especially true of the province of Quebec where the administration of the Roads Department has been characterized by such signal success. I submit that we are departing from the spirit of the constitution when we allow the money of the country to be voted in this way. If the Government wants to increase the grant it should do it in the regular way, that is by increasing the subsidies to the provinces. There is no doubt that the feeling for complete provincial control which was predominant before Confederation and which our forefathers so strongly shared is again becoming prevalent. The premier of the province of Quebec, the Hon. Mr. Taschereau, recently in an address at Montreal protested against the action of the present Federal Government in encroaching upon provincial privileges by dealing with highways, technical education, health and other matters, and I for one would reluctantly see money granted in this way unless it is granted freely and with due regard for the constitutional rights of the provinces.

Mr. CLARK (Red Deer): My hon. friend the minister knows his own business best, but I think he would be well advised to let this item stand over. He has still some information to supply to his own followers. I at any rate would like to clear myself of any suspicion of wanting to hold up the item, least of all should I care to be under the suspicion of holding up the salary of the excellent public servant who is mentioned in connection with the Highway Act. However, I should just like to remind the minister that my hon. friend from Dufferin as well as myself and many others opposed this policy at its inception, and I am not surprised at the story my hon. friend from Dufferin has to tell to-night. He pointed out that the duplicating of the work of the province by the Dominion was sure to lead to trouble; but when wilful ministers will not listen to plain, honest farmers, like my hon. friend from Dufferin and myself, on road-making, they are sure to get into trouble. It is all very well when they want information regarding high Imperial schemes to