

but when the provincial government has built something like 900 miles and the federal government undertakes to build 200 miles, I do not think they should stop at mile 178. As I say, this section of the road can be gone over with a model T Ford which has a sufficiently high clearance. If this road were linked up it would provide transportation from Prince Rupert to Vancouver. If it were necessary to evacuate troops from Prince Rupert they would not be able to take them over these fourteen miles of road except in a model T truck.

Mr. GRAYDON: It looks as though they are playing both ends against the middle.

Mr. CRUICKSHANK: There is not any middle.

Mr. HANSON (Skeena): They are playing the middle against both ends. Boards of trade and other interested bodies have appealed to the government to complete this road. I also know that the officers commanding have recommended that the gap be closed up. The provincial and dominion governments should get together and complete this gap. It is absolutely impossible to convince any layman that it should not be completed. I should like to ask the minister the total amount spent on the road up to the present time and what would be necessary to complete it to Kitwanga.

Mr. CRERAR: The amount spent to March 31, 1944, was \$8,619,000 in round figures; of this vote \$1,500,000 is to complete construction, which will make the total cost of construction roughly \$10,119,000. The amount of road to be completed is not fourteen miles as the hon. member for Skeena states, but twenty-three miles.

Mr. HANSON (Skeena): Ten miles of the road from Hazelton is passable road.

Mr. CRERAR: It would cost several hundred thousand dollars to complete the road. There are difficulties in connection with materials and labour.

Mr. O'NEILL: It must be almost a solid tunnel if it is going to cost that much.

Mr. HANSON (Skeena): The estimate of the provincial public works engineer is less than a hundred thousand dollars.

Mr. CRERAR: That is simply to repair the existing road. To build a road of the same standard would cost over half a million dollars.

Mr. REID: I do not think the minister gave the complete picture. The information we have is that when the United States mili-

[Mr. O. Hanson.]

tary men looked over the north country there was some kind of agreement arrived at whereby they would build the Alaska highway through Canada, which would become the property of the government of Canada, and Canada would build a road into Prince Rupert. As anyone from British Columbia knows, Prince Rupert is largely a United States city because there are so many United States troops there. That was a definite understanding, and I am rather surprised to hear the minister say that the project is not being completed because of a lack of \$100,000. An undertaking was given that a road would be built from Hazelton to Prince Rupert, and not carrying out that project meant not carrying out the bargain that was entered into when the road was started.

Mr. CRERAR: Who gave that undertaking that a road would be built from Hazelton to Prince Rupert?

Mr. HANSON (Skeena): It was to connect up with the provincial highway at Cedarvale. There was no highway from Terrace to Cedarvale and the section of road to Kitwanga was impassable.

Mr. REID: If the United States government had not carried out its agreement to build the Alaska highway—

An hon. MEMBER: Or Canol.

Mr. REID: —we would have claimed a breach of the agreement. I urge the minister to consider this matter and see to it that this road is completed.

Item stands.

Progress reported.

At eleven o'clock the house adjourned, without question put, pursuant to standing order.

Monday, May 29, 1944

The house met at three o'clock.

PENSIONS

OLD AGE AND THE BLIND—CHANGES IN ADMINISTRATION

Hon. J. L. ILSLEY (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement in regard to pensions for the aged and the blind.

As a result of negotiations with the provinces extending over several months, agreement has been reached on a number of changes in the administration of this scheme. I now wish to table two orders in council which have been passed implementing these changes. Before