

the Federal Government has constructed are one of the greatest assets of the country.

Hon. members will remember that the House of Commons passed similar legislation to this in 1912, but that it was rejected by the Senate as that Chamber did not think public opinion would approve of money being spent on highways at that time. The Bill was passed a second time by this Chamber, but was again rejected by the Senate. At the last election the Prime Minister reaffirmed the Government's policy of assisting in the construction of national highways.

We would like to have this Bill passed for the purpose of giving employment to those who are in need of it at this time. The principal reason for it is not so much to give employment as that the work is of the utmost importance and should, we think, be proceeded with in order to facilitate transportation. If hon. members can see their way clear this evening, I would like to have the resolution passed so that the Bill may be read a first time and printed. I do not wish to urge the Bill, after it has got its first reading, until hon. members have had time to consider it and thoroughly understand what it intends.

Mr. McKENZIE: Will the minister kindly tell the Committee if the policy of the Government in regard to this matter is the same as it was when they first introduced the Bill in 1912?

Mr. J. D. REID: No, this is not exactly the same.

Mr. McKENZIE: What is the difference?

Mr. J. D. REID: The distribution of our contribution is different from what it was at that time. However, so far as that is concerned, I am willing, when it comes to the Committee, if necessary, to amend it in any way.

Mr. McKENZIE: What I really wished to ask the minister is, does the Government still adhere to the policy it adopted in 1912 as to the class of roads upon which this money is to be expended?

Mr. J. D. REID: Yes; the intention at that time was to expend money only on first-class roads, and that is the intention now.

Mr. PROULX: Are the roads classified by the officers of the Dominion Government or by officers of the province?

Mr. J. D. REID: The roads will be classified on specifications to be agreed on between the Dominion and the province. After the road has been located and specifications

have been agreed upon the Dominion Government will have an inspector who will see that the road is constructed in accordance with the specification, and the Dominion Government will not agree to make expenditures except on first-class roads.

Mr. THOMAS FOSTER (East York): I understand that about three years ago a measure somewhat similar to this was before the House. I believe it was for the

purpose of building a transcontinental highway of a high standard, and the responsibility was

to be entirely with the Dominion Government. Now you have changed your attitude somewhat by placing the responsibility of this Government upon the provincial government; that is, I understand this \$20,000,000, to be spread over five years, is to be divided amongst the various provinces. Three standards of road construction are mentioned. I do not know what the specifications or standards are, but I venture to say that the standard of even No. 1 would not be sufficient for a transcontinental highway of the standard that should be built. We have a standard in the Toronto-Hamilton highway which is the best and highest of any construction in Canada, but I do not think that even that construction, if we are going to build a transcontinental highway with the increased traffic between the various centres, would be sufficient. This Government should adopt the best standard, looking to the future. They should take the responsibility, if they adopt the policy of the transcontinental highway, of the expenditure of that money. Why should we divide up this money and hand it to the provinces, whose system is one of patronage, as we know? This Government knows no patronage, and the experience with the Toronto-Hamilton highway, which was built under the provincial government, was that we got only about 60 or 65 cents on the dollar of that construction. Where did the other 35 cents go? I would say, perhaps in the way of patronage, or bad management, or lack of experience; but at any rate we did not get 100 cents on the dollar in value on that construction. Then, if that is the experience in connection with provincial work in the past, why should we hand more money over to the provinces and get only 60 cents on the dollar for the money we are going to expend? If we are going to adopt a policy of highways that means a large expenditure spread over some years, then let us have our own equipment, our own engineers, and act on our own respon-