

Trans-Canada Highway

I do not know if it means when the minister sets in or winter itself, but there does appear to be some similarity in the thoughts of the minister and the premier. The premier appears to have accepted the fact that it is all over and done with. In his letter to the minister he says:

Many thanks for your letter of September 2 . . . I may say that we are most eager to be in on the proposition from the very commencement.

The premier may take it as being all right. He may have decided Newfoundland can afford this expenditure, and if he sees his way clear I am not going to knock it, but frankly I do not see it as he does. I am quite worried about it. I would certainly wish to see a highway in Newfoundland in keeping with the rest of Canada. I certainly would wish Newfoundland to be able to pay its proportionate share of the cost of the highway, but I do not see how Newfoundland can do it. The bases in Newfoundland need highroads from the defence angle, but unless there is some other contribution suggested than that of 50 per cent to be paid by the dominion I do not see how the province can provide the balance. I heard the leader of the Social Credit party (Mr. Low) say that for some provinces the contribution should be 33 per cent. I am not able to give a figure for Newfoundland. All I can say is that it should be less than any other province of Canada if Newfoundland is to pay its share. I am not able to go into figures, but I should like to see the road constructed. I should like to see it properly built, and I should like to see it built soon. I hope when legislation is being introduced there will be an exception in the case of your poor cousin in the matter of contribution.

Mr. P. C. Black (Cumberland): Mr. Speaker, I am in favour of the general policy of federal contribution to the building of highways and assisting the provinces therein. Therefore I am in general sympathy with the proposal before the house. I am particularly glad to give support to a minister from Nova Scotia because of my personal regard for him. I am in favour of it also because for some years I had considerable experience with highway administration and construction, and I have given my support at all times to improving highways starting in 1918, when the province of Nova Scotia had lefthand drive and nothing but sheep and cow trails all over the province. The highways were then looked after by sectional highway statute labour, when a provincial highway board was set up, of which I was a member. There were five members; three of them were supposed to be Liberals and two were associated with the other party. In those days there were only two

parties, but there were no politics in our efforts, at least so far as I was concerned.

We laid down certain policies and started a program. I have given my support to highway development from 1918 to the present time. I had the privilege and responsibility of being minister of highways in Nova Scotia for eight years. I had to take up the burden of administering the highways department from those early days. We were able to accomplish a good deal, and according to our revenue and resources, I believe that we accomplished as much towards the construction and maintenance of highways as has been done since. It has been the policy of everybody in the province of Nova Scotia to advance the construction of our highway transportation system. Great progress has been made.

I had the honour of proposing the policy of federal assistance for the construction of highways at the Conservative convention held at Winnipeg, which policy was adopted and put into effect under the Bennett government. Unfortunately it had to be carried out in the days of the depression when it was most difficult to secure funds to advance the programs that we had in hand. Our objective was to give as much employment as possible and to distribute the work as widely as we could. We were able to keep all our villages, towns and cities in the province of Nova Scotia solvent during those days, and no municipality defaulted on its bonds.

The industries of Nova Scotia could not give employment to their old hands. The workmen's compensation board recorded \$30 million less in wages per year than they did a few years before. Because we had the responsibility in those days we were blamed by some—and I have heard it in the house many times—for the depression which was continent and world wide. We met the situation the best we could. We undertook to build many sections of the trans-Canada highway. We were not able to build it in a continuous stretch, but in different localities where labour requirements were the greatest. It is a problem today for the present minister, and for the ministers of all the provinces, to lay out the route of the trans-Canada highway so that it will serve their provinces. In those days we laid out the highway in Nova Scotia from the New Brunswick boundary to Cape Breton, through Sydney, and on to Louisbourg, that old fortress of the historic days when the French and the British fought for ascendancy.

It is more important than ever that that route be adopted under the present program