

leader of the opposition has just said that Mr. John Hall Kelly possesses that qualification in fine measure.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): A very jovial man.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I have no doubt Mr. Kelly's genial personality has enabled him to get information which could not have been obtained by anyone less genial and less genuinely Irish in some of his characteristics.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): It becomes almost a truism to say that we are going to face difficult days. Speaking in the house only a short time ago, the Prime Minister himself said that experts were agreed that not only was there a possibility of an attempted invasion of Great Britain, but that synchronized with it there was the probability of attacks on Gibraltar and Singapore. No one knows just to what extent the area of the war may spread. Thoughtful people in Canada of necessity must be somewhat concerned, if the war stretches over a large enough area, as to whether or not parts of Canada may be exposed, not so much to the danger of invasion but to the danger of attack by occasional raiders of different sorts.

In view of what I have said, I should like to ask the Prime Minister two questions, knowing that the answers can be given in only a limited way. I should like to know, first, whether the plans for the proposed Alaskan highway have been completed, whether any work has been commenced, and, if so, on what financial basis between Canada and the United States it is being carried out. When will the work be completed?

My second question has reference to the plans formulated by the joint defence board. Again we cannot expect the Prime Minister to make any statement as to where there may be defence projects. I do say, however, that the House of Commons has a right to know that certain plans are being proceeded with. The joint defence board travelled across the country, midst the fanfare of trumpets, and I believe the people would be reassured if they knew the plans were being carried into operation. If they are, we should know something of what the financial arrangements are as between Canada and the United States, whether work has been started or will be commenced in the near future, and approximately what it will cost the Canadian people and the people of the United States of America. Those are two matters in connection with which the Prime Minister might make a statement. I realize that he must use discretion in giving out information, but he

should be able to tell us enough to assure this committee and the country that adequate steps are being taken to arrange for mutual assistance on the part of Canada and the United States in the event of certain contingencies arising in the near future.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I do not know whether my hon. friend was in the house last evening, but at that time I was asked a similar question and sought to reply. My statement will appear on *Hansard* of yesterday. I referred to the work of the permanent joint defence board and also to the government's attitude toward disclosing plans which have been recommended by that board. I did not refer specifically to air bases on the route to Alaska, but I might say to my hon. friend that the government is proceeding with the work of establishing bases in accordance with the recommendation of the joint board.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): I was referring to the Alaska highway rather than to air bases.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Perhaps I could give what information I have. Pursuant to recommendations of the permanent joint defence board, the Canadian government have arranged to provide suitable landing fields complete with lighting, radio facilities, meteorological equipment and housing for personnel at Grande Prairie, Fort St. John, Fort Nelson, Watson Lake, White Horse, Prince George and Smithers. These fields will provide all the necessary ground facilities for planes travelling from the United States or Canada to Alaska. They will be valuable for commerce as well as for defence purposes.

I have given that statement because it has some bearing on the other matter. The joint board did take into consideration defence problems on the Pacific coast as well as on the Atlantic, and these bases are being established in accordance with the recommendation of the board. The board made no recommendation with respect to the Alaska highway. I believe my hon. friend knows that this matter has been referred to commissions which are inquiring into the matter at the present time.

Both the Canadian government and the United States appointed commissions to examine into this question of the proposed Alaskan highway, and an interim report was made in April, 1940. Since that time further reconnaissance surveys have been made covering possible routes in northern British Columbia and the Yukon territory. A meeting of the Canadian commission is to be held within the next few weeks, which will be followed