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Proceedings at the Legislative Council

(Continued from page 10.)

cess on the initiation for completion of any one part of the scheme and then expect the whole to succeed. Only a well-rounded, carefully-planned and capably-managed scheme has any chance of success.

Perhaps the Honourable the Leader of the Government, has such a plan now up his sleeve. I trust so and I suggest that, presently, he will reveal it to this House. After all, this measure has to be treated on its merits. It is meritorious only if it ensures the provisions of profitable traffic for highroads that are to cost us two million dollars as a start. If the Honourable gentleman can show us how and when this traffic can be secured and directed over these highroads, then one of the most serious criticisms of this measure must automatically disappear. The fact that the Leader of the Government has not played such a trump card in initiating a debate which is concerned with the principle of the whole measure, induces me to conclude that no such plan has yet been formulated, by his party.

The extent to which plans have been formulated by the Government was indicated by the Honourable gentleman in his speech on yesterday. In the course of that eloquent effort he told us something of the programme of road construction and road routing which the government propose to carry out during the next two years. I admire the bold and ambitious manner in which he sketched out these plans. The Honourable gentleman possesses the happy knack of presenting to his listeners in the most attractive colors any programme in which he is keenly interested. Harkening to his artistic portrayal of the beauties of nature all over the country—the wondrous Humber River; the coastline of the Southern Shore; the magnificent harbor of Trinity; the Random Sounds; the Island Tickle of Notre Dame Bay; the flocks of Fortune Bay and of Hermitage Bay—one is apt to forget that many millions of filthy dollars will be required to link up these spots of super-scenic beauty and to overlook the very essential, if more prosaic matter of ways and means. Even the annual maintenance charges in respect to the present proposed expenditure of two million dollars will total over three hundred thousand dollars. The Honourable, the Leader of the Government has not yet told us how it is proposed to liquidate these charges, year by year.

I have already referred to what I regard as one serious weakness of this scheme—absolute failure to show us whence is coming the business that alone can make the investment profitable one and what steps, if any, the government have taken to ensure us that business when we are ready to handle it. I now call attention to what strikes me as a serious mistake—the plan to rush ahead with highroad construction in several separate and distinct parts of the country at one and the same time, as well as the displayed tendency to treat the scheme as even more one of local improvement than an avenue for securing to this country big and profitable business. My contention is that in initiating this scheme much more of caution and concentration should be displayed. We know that Canada reaps a financial harvest of hundreds of millions of dollars from tourist traffic annually. We know that this country possesses natural attractions and advantages even superior to Canada's best. And we are all confident that we can divert, gather and maintain permanent hold on material proportion of that profitable tourist traffic. But can we? Surely, the mistake of over-confidence in his connection would be as grave as the offence of pessimism. Obviously, the whole affair contains many speculative elements. It is well, therefore, for us to advance in this matter step by step, and avoid what may be a fatal error of attempting to cover all the ground at one time and with a single huge stride. If the government have in mind the provision of hundreds of miles of new and reconstructed highroads, at a cost of two million of dollars, to be started primarily as a local improvement programme and regardless of tourist or other outside traffic, which alone can add the element of profitable returns to such an ambitious and extensive scheme, then this portion of my argument falls to the ground. In its place must be substituted the declaration of the Honourable, the Leader of the Government, to the effect that this scheme affords an outstanding means of benefiting the fishermen of Newfoundland. "How," he asked, "shall we help them so directly and well as by opening up the country for the development of its labor-giving resources? We shall employ him making roads, we shall settle his sons upon the lands made accessible, and employ him and them upon the industries these roads will make possible."

But, I refuse to interpret that pronouncement of the Honourable, the Leader of the Government, as embodying the whole principle or even the chief part of the principle that underlies this highroad scheme. Such a policy would savor far too much of a thinly-guised and very expensive

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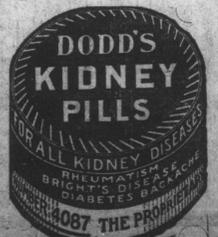
The Shoe Men

feb 13, f. m. w. f.

system of relief—work for the unemployed, work for those who are tired of the fisheries and work for those who would go fishing but are denied the opportunity. Moreover, our experience in connection with the railroad has taught us to be exceedingly slow to accept at face value and as true to fact these glowing paintings of multitudinous and profitable local benefits to be ensured through the provision of extensive and expensive transportation facilities. Let us then forget this appeal to sentiment pure and simple, and face the cold, hard facts of the situation as they relate to this highroads scheme.

(To be continued.)

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