

Trans-Canada Highway Act

Mr. Howard: I am trying to do a little fishing and find out what the intention of the government is with respect to a second trans-Canada highway but I am getting nowhere. The Prime Minister said in the house, as found on page 1839 of *Hansard*:

The question of another trans-Canada highway has not been discussed with the provinces particularly.

I do not know whether he means that it has not been discussed with the provinces at all or whether particular provinces have not been included in the discussions. We all know that many of the comments made by the Prime Minister can be taken a number of ways. We are very disappointed and I am sure the people who have made representations are disappointed that nothing is going to happen with respect to a second trans-Canada highway until the first one is completed. I assume that means nothing will happen until the last mile in the last province is completed, whether that be some three years from now as is expected or whether it be five or ten years from now which will mean that the government will have to come back in a few years and ask for another extension.

I suggest to the minister and the government that this is most unfair because the financial formula was not equitable in the first place. The financial formula needs to be revised in order that provinces like Newfoundland will have a better opportunity to participate and finance the building of the road. If the government is going to continue to maintain the same financial formula it is simply penalizing those provinces which because of their geography or their economy have been less able to finance the building of the first trans-Canada highway than other provinces.

I think it is most unwise to ask other provinces to wait until the last mile of the first trans-Canada highway in the last province has been built. It is most unwise not to make other arrangements for financial participation in order to enable these poorer provinces to finish their section of the trans-Canada highway.

Mr. Winch: I should like to ask the minister to comment on the situation I raised with regard to the peculiar situation at Vancouver with respect to access roads and any offers of federal assistance that may have been turned down because of toll highways or toll bridges.

Mr. Pickersgill: Before the minister replies I should also like to put a question to him. I have in my hand an advertisement which appeared in the *Telegram* of St. John's, Newfoundland, on Friday, August 14, 1959.

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

It is headed, "Charter for a New Deal for Newfoundland". In one corner it contains a picture of Mr. Malcolm Hollett, at that time leader of the Progressive Conservative party in Newfoundland, and it also contains the program of the provincial party that was put before the electors in the last provincial election. Point No. 10 is as follows:

Complete the trans-Canada highway on terms consistent with Newfoundland's needs and capacity to pay.

Then it goes on to say:

If a proper agreement, one that took due account of Newfoundland's needs and its low capacity to pay, had been entered into by the provincial Liberal government when they came to power 10 years ago the highway across Newfoundland could have been built and fully paved by now. Progressive Conservative leader Malcolm Hollett has talked with the Prime Minister, Mr. Diefenbaker, and with other ministers of the Diefenbaker cabinet, about the impossible position Newfoundland is in under the present trans-Canada highway contract. Mr. Hollett believes that "the Diefenbaker government is prepared to re-negotiate that useless agreement; . . . that the Diefenbaker government is prepared to give sympathetic consideration to the submission that the highway be completed entirely by the federal government."

This was the pledge on which the leader of the Progressive Conservative party in Newfoundland went to the country in August of last year. I realize I would be out of order to recall the circumstances, but hon. members will remember that Mr. Hollett was the express champion of the Prime Minister in connection with an attitude taken by the Prime Minister in this house which was not so popular in Newfoundland. Mr. Hollett is no longer a member of the legislature, although I believe he is still the leader of the Progressive Conservative party in Newfoundland. Mr. Hollett says in this statement:

Progressive Conservative Leader Malcolm Hollett has talked with the Prime Minister, Mr. Diefenbaker, and with other ministers of the Diefenbaker cabinet, about the impossible position Newfoundland is in under the present trans-Canada highway contract. Mr. Hollett believes "that the Diefenbaker government is prepared to re-negotiate that useless agreement . . . that the Diefenbaker government is prepared to give sympathetic consideration to the submission that the highway be completed entirely by the federal government."

This advertisement appeared on August 14. I do not expect the Minister of Public Works who, at the time this was written, I do not believe was a member of the cabinet, to tell me what actually did take place in these conversations between Mr. Hollett and the Prime Minister. However, I wanted to put this on the record today so the minister would have it before him and have an opportunity to ascertain what did take place in connection with the conversations and to ascertain whether or not Mr. Hollett was right in his contention that the Diefenbaker government