

*Trans-Canada Highway Act*

The Conservatives, when in opposition, while supporting the bill in principle were critical of certain aspects of the project, particularly when the 1956 amendments were before the house. They expressed the view that the federal government's portion of the grant was too low. The Minister of Transport, when a private member in opposition—I see the genial gentleman smiling, so I think he knows what I am going to say—stated, as recorded in *Hansard* for 1956, pages 2954 and 2955:

Why should it be that during five years of unprecedented boom we find that less than one-third of this highway has been completed?

Further down on the same page, he stated:

I think that we in this parliament, particularly the government, must face up to the hard, cold fact that if this highway is to be built within the foreseeable future, the federal government must assume the financial responsibility for its construction and stop playing around with make-shift methods of trying to get it built.

Apparently the Minister of Transport has done nothing toward impressing the government with the views he expressed while he was in opposition. This government has done nothing to improve this alleged shortcoming about which the minister spoke when in opposition.

Let us see what the present Minister of Justice had to say in the 1956 debate when he was a private member. I quote from the record the minister's motion as found on page 2980 of *Hansard* for April 16, 1956:

That, in the opinion of this house, (a) the requirements of national defence, as well as the need to serve existing and to promote further development of Canada's territory and resources dictate that there should be more than one east-west trans-Canada highway, as well as several main north-south highways to provide connection with routes in the United States—

The last part of the motion reads:

And therefore the government should take into immediate consideration with the governments of the various provinces the advisability of enlarging the scope of the existing trans-Canada agreements so as to develop a system of national highways, both east-west and north-south, financed and maintained jointly by the dominion and the provinces on an acceptable and realistic basis.

The Minister of Justice, again when he was the private member for Kamloops, referred to the Hon. Mr. Winters, then minister of public works, as recorded at page 3109 of *Hansard* for April 19, 1956:

—why does he not take the other course we urge him to take and say that the federal government should have the full responsibility for this highway—

These are the remarks made by members opposite when they were in the opposition, including many of the present cabinet ministers now sitting on the treasury benches, concerning greater financial assistance to the

provinces for the completion of the trans-Canada highway, a second trans-Canada highway, as well as connecting highways from north and south as well as east and west. We may well ask, what happened to their former attitude once they became responsible for shaping the policies? Why are they not doing all these things they criticized the former government for not doing?

The Liberal policy on transportation, drafted in the 1958 annual convention, included the completion of the trans-Canada highway. The policy statement, found on page 39 of the report, reads:

Assistance to the provinces and territories for developing roads to the north and consideration of a policy of a federal-provincial-municipal highway program aimed at providing a modern network of trunk highways.

The Liberal policy drafted at this convention endorsed special consideration for the Atlantic provinces, and that is found on pages 40 to 42 of the report. I quote:

The Liberal party to help remove the economic disabilities of the Atlantic provinces, advocates special assistance in the provision of trunk highways in all four Atlantic provinces for heavy traffic to and from central Canada and the United States to promote trade and the tourist industry.

When the present Leader of the Opposition and leader of the Liberal party was asked about the scale of assistance contemplated in the Liberal party program to provide special assistance for the building of trunk highways in the Atlantic provinces he stated that what he had in mind was the assumption by the federal government of 90 per cent of the cost of completing the trans-Canada highway in the four Atlantic provinces, and the earliest possible discussion with the governments of those provinces about the routes of other key trunk highways. He also stated:

In other provinces the federal government has been assisting with railway construction, but what is needed in the Atlantic provinces is modern highways.

Yes, Mr. Chairman, the Atlantic provinces are in dire need of more and better highways. They are vital to the future economy of these provinces. Without them expansion cannot be brought about.

The Liberal party policy of 1958 on transportation facilities for the Atlantic provinces is the answer to one of the Atlantic provinces' great problem. Much was heard about the need for a second trans-Canada highway from the Conservatives when they were in opposition. Many large sections of our country not being served by the present trans-Canada highway are in need of an adequate cross country route. An area which should be served by a second trans-Canada highway or an adequate cross country route is the area