

Proposed Vancouver-Sea Island Tunnel

engineering survey made now to study the construction of such a bridge or a tunnel, and that it communicate with the provincial government with a view to solving the very urgent problem of providing adequate access.

I have discussed this matter with many of the people in the lower mainland area. The simplicity of the problem has made it rather difficult to argue, but the important fact is that construction should be commencing very soon on the terminal. As I have indicated by reference to the tremendous increase in the population of the lower mainland and the volume of business being done at the Vancouver international airport, it is urgent now that the federal and provincial governments get together and assure that a bridge or tunnel will be constructed so that adequate access to the Vancouver international airport will be provided.

Hon. Lionel Chevrier (Laurier): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the house will be grateful to the hon. member who has introduced this resolution which concerns a problem of acute importance, I am sure, to those who live in the great metropolis of Vancouver. The resolution invites the federal government to give consideration to the advisability of constructing either a bridge or a tunnel across the north arm of the Fraser river between the city of Vancouver and Sea Island in the municipality of Richmond, which municipality I take it forms part of the hon. member's constituency.

I have no hesitation in saying at once that we on this side of the house will support this resolution, but perhaps the hon. member will allow me to take the liberty of making one or two suggestions. It seems to me that when members of this house are considering the very vital problems of transportation in our country today we should at once be willing to give consideration at least, if not action, to any measure that is desirable from the point of view of improving traffic conditions in a metropolitan area such as Vancouver.

The other thing I should like to say is this. The resolution speaks only of consideration, and toward the end of the hon. member's remarks he said something about an engineering survey. However I should like to make this suggestion. I think that an engineering survey is not enough because, if I understand what he has in mind, an engineering survey is normally made by the engineers of the Department of Public Works. My memory of a number of engineering surveys made either by the Department of Public Works alone or jointly with the Department of Transport leads me to say that it takes quite a long time before there is any result. If there is going to be any action in connection with a resolution such as this one, it would

[Mr. Drysdale.]

strike me that a committee or commission of engineers independent of either of the two departments should be established.

We have, for instance, the question of the Richelieu waterway. First, the Department of Transport gave that matter consideration and then the Department of Public Works gave it consideration, as well as a committee of officials of the two departments. After two years had gone by the matter was finally submitted jointly by the two governments to the international joint commission. I make these observations because a great deal of time was lost in that regard.

That is why it would strike me that a committee of engineers or perhaps a committee comprised of an economist and two engineers might study the desirability of (a) building a bridge, (b) building a tunnel as well as (c) the question of cost and (d) the location and any other matters that the government would want to submit to such a body. I only make these suggestions in an attempt to be helpful because I have found that a great deal of time has been lost in making many of these surveys in the past.

The hon. member referred to the constitutional problem. While I have not given it any study, offhand I believe it is one that might perhaps come within the sections to which he has referred. If not, the Navigable Waters Protection Act is a statute that might be called into play in a project of this nature. As the hon. member knows, that statute comes partly under the jurisdiction of the Department of Transport and partly under the Department of Public Works, but for the purposes that the hon. member has in mind it seems to me that the matter is one which would fall under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Works.

In order not to delay the resolution and also to give others an opportunity to speak, I will sum up my remarks by saying that, first, the opposition is favourable to any project of a transportation nature such as this which will improve traffic conditions in any great metropolitan area such as Vancouver and, second, in order to bring the matter to a head quickly it strikes me that not only should consideration be given as requested in the resolution but action should be taken upon the resolution by the appointment of a board of engineers to study the various aspects of what we think is a laudable project.

Mr. E. J. Broome (Vancouver South): I have a good deal of pleasure, Mr. Speaker, in supporting the motion introduced to the house today by the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond (Mr. Drysdale). It states:

That, in the opinion of this house, the federal government should give consideration to the advisability of constructing a bridge or tunnel