

the Canadian commission, which comprised in its membership Mr. J. M. Wardle, Chief Engineer of the Parks Branch of the Federal Department of Public Works, Mr. George P. Napier, Assistant Chief Engineer of the Department of Works of British Columbia, and the Hon. George Black, then Speaker of the House of Commons and member for the Yukon territory.

I find in the report of the American commission, at page 2, a summary of the reasons why it considered this road to be of advantage to the United States.

The benefits to be gained from the project from the American point of view are:

(a) Development of Alaska through making the territory accessible by highway, resulting in an increase of population and consequent increase in revenue from taxes, tending to decrease the present necessity for federal appropriations for the support of the territory.

(b) The road would be a great contribution to the welfare of American citizens now living in Alaska under adverse conditions, by providing a physical connection with the vast continental road system.

(c) Opening of new country that is now practically inaccessible, giving opportunity for settlement, investment of capital and employment.

(d) The new road would make accessible to the continental highway system the existing road net in central Alaska comprising about 900 miles, providing a new and valuable area for exploration, for recreation, or for business purposes.

(e) The highway would foster air commerce with Alaska by furnishing a guiding landmark and providing service to aviators along the most practicable flying route to the interior of the territory and to Asia.

(f) Promotion of friendly relations between citizens of United States and Canada.

There is not a word in this report about a military highway.

Now, there is one point I want to develop for just a moment. I might hesitate to do so if my remarks applied only to the United States, but some of them apply equally to the reasons why Canada should be interested in this road.

I find at page 31 of this report some very interesting information with regard to aeroplanes.

Western Canada and Alaska occupy a most significant position with respect to possible air travel between the old and new worlds. There is no land bridge across the Atlantic ocean that does not include jumps of hundreds of miles over open water, constituting a threat against aeroplanes that may not be overcome for many years, but Asia and America are separated by only 56 miles at Bering Strait, and even this short distance is cut in two by the Diomed Islands, which lie midway between East Cape, Siberia, and Cape Prince of Wales, Alaska. Nor does the fact that this strait is in the far north result in a long detour from the direct routes between many Ameri-

can and European or Asian points, as might be supposed by those who have not studied the relation between various places in the northern hemisphere as they actually are on the globe.

From New York or Montreal to Europe, the shortest distances are, of course, by way of the Atlantic ocean, but to Asia the distances are less by way of Alaska and Siberia. For example, the shortest line between New York and Tokio passes through midwestern and western Canada and through Alaska, just a few miles north of Fairbanks. From all Pacific coast American ports, the shortest air-line routes to Asia, as far west as India or Persia, lie close to Alaska. Alaska, therefore, owing to its favourable strategic location, is the most suitable jump-off point for air travel to Asia.

And later on there is this statement:

The best air route from western United States to the interior of Alaska is approximately over the same valleys in which this proposed Pacific-Yukon highway is to be built.

The advantages of this route over a route directly along the coast are then set out.

Everyone knows how essential it is to efficient and safe air traffic to have on the ground good motor roads.

These are, briefly, the reasons formulated by the American commission in 1933, which I say are a direct challenge to my honourable friend's statement that this road would be of no use whatever to the United States.

Hon. Mr. GRIESBACH: I think my honourable friend is misquoting me there. The point I made was that the road would be of no use to us. I never denied that it would be useful to the United States.

Hon. Mr. FARRIS: I have read what my honourable friend said about its usefulness to the United States, and I invite honourable members who are interested to read it for themselves. I do not think I need repeat it.

Now I come to the Canadian viewpoint with respect to this road. Coming from British Columbia, I am perhaps more concerned about this matter than I should be if I were still living in my native province of New Brunswick, but I have an idea that nowadays Canadians, regardless of what part of this great Dominion they live in, do take a deep personal interest in the welfare and prosperity of every other part, and I say without any hesitation, honourable senators, that the construction of a highway through British Columbia to Alaska, far from being, as my honourable friend has asserted, useless from the standpoint of Canada, would be of great advantage to our country.

Let me remind honourable members that in British Columbia we have another empire, comparable in size to Alaska, and of course

Hon. Mr. FARRIS.