

Highways

Atlantic provinces and forwarded to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) in March, 1969. This submission, to which the hon. member for Moncton referred, relates to the corridor road in connection with spending money on roads in Atlantic Canada. It suggests that especially when we consider spending large amounts of money, an over-all view of present and future needs should be taken, including connecting roads between provinces and methods of ingress and egress to and from the whole area. I quote from page 17 of that report under the heading, "Transportation Modes—Highways".

An adequate highway network is essential to the economic development of the region. The limited financial capabilities of the Atlantic provinces necessitate an increase in the federal investment in the arterial highway program. A long-term program is essential to get maximum benefit from available funds. The province of Newfoundland and Labrador has special highway requirements within the Atlantic region.

The position of the Atlantic provinces on highways was outlined in detail in their submission to the Atlantic Development Board on April 1, 1968. At that time the submission to the ADB recognized that the subsequent findings contained in this report might necessitate some amendments to the original submission. The four provinces recommend the following modifications in the ADB brief:

- (1) Greater emphasis on the need for urban arterials.
- (2) Recognition in the long-term program of the differing needs and financial capabilities of the individual provinces.

I quote one more paragraph of the report:

Emphasis should be placed upon acceptance by the federal government of the principle of such a long-term program and upon acceptance of that principle the following course of action is proposed:

- (1) Before implementing a long-term arterial highway program, a detailed assessment of the network needs of the individual provinces should be carried out. Such an assessment should include detailed analysis of the potential impact on the regional highway network of such major projects as the Northumberland Strait causeway and the corridor road.

I would point out to the hon. member who introduced the motion that nowhere in this report, or in any other submission or report I have seen, have recent governments of Nova Scotia headed by men of like political persuasion to his placed a high priority on the Fundy Trail. The hon. member for Halifax-East Hants might be well advised to first convince his province of Nova Scotia of the high priority the Fund Trail deserves and which I agree it should have.

The hon. member for Halifax-East Hants and the hon. member for Moncton suggest that this government consider the advisability of declaring as rapidly as feasible a 90-10 per cent cost-sharing formula in respect of the highways' program formerly carried on with the Atlantic provinces by the Atlantic Development Board. I suggest that the formula detailed by the hon. member for Westmorland-Kent (Mr. Crossman) is more generous than the one requested.

● (5:50 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to take up too much time. I will simply repeat what I believe was said by the hon. member for Westmorland-Kent, that in the fiscal year

[Mr. Smith (Northumberland-Miramichi).]

1970-71 alone almost as much money has been committed to highway development in the Atlantic provinces as was provided over four years under the Atlantic Development Board agreements. With respect to highways that are assisted, specifically the Fundy Trail project and the crossing of the Shubenacadie River, it must be pointed out, as has been mentioned already, that they are joint programs with the provinces. In all cases they must be highways which Ottawa and the provinces jointly agree are important contributors to the economic development of the province.

I am aware of the merit of the roads the hon. member has referred to and their potential contribution to the development of these areas, but apparently the provinces concerned felt, and Ottawa agreed, that they would not contribute as importantly to the development of the region as a whole and the individual provinces as would the highways that were chosen for priority construction.

In conclusion, I repeat that I would support the hon. member's motion fully, with the single reservation that the priority in respect of it must be spelled out by the provincial governments concerned. And, of course—this is understood—this project must not be constructed at the expense of funds that would otherwise be used for projects which I have indicated, and which the two provinces have indicated, have higher priority.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, lest the record should seem to indicate that only members from the Atlantic provinces are interested in this motion, perhaps a voice from the west might have the floor for 30 seconds. I admit to an ancestral prejudice in favour of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick but I believe it is also true that in western Canada we think that what is good for the Atlantic provinces is good for Canada. I like the idea of an over-all highways' program for the Atlantic provinces, I support the Fundy Trail, and I believe Nova Scotia should have the Shubenacadie crossing. I commend the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave) for presenting this motion this afternoon.

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Lancaster): Mr. Speaker, in spite of the advance billing of the hon. member for Moncton (Mr. Thomas), I really had not intended to make extensive remarks. The parliamentary secretary has been making notes so I want to give him plenty of time to talk out the bill. There is, however, one thing I should like to say briefly in connection with the Fundy Trail. I have advocated this for years, along with many other members, and when I get up to speak about the Fundy Trail now everybody yells out "funny trail". But it is a great project and I, as one who helped in its early promotion, envisage a particular type of vacation trail the funds for which would not come from regular highway sources.

I regret that this has been misunderstood by members of this House and by many of the sincere promoters of this project. I do not feel we should take the highway moneys of New Brunswick or Nova Scotia, regardless of the governments concerned, and allocate them to a tourist trail, because these moneys are scarce. I believe we