

To-day the Government comes in with a proposal to give \$20,000,000—not to be spent in one locality, as my honourable friend from Middleton (Hon. W. B. Ross) seemed to imagine. He seemed to think that the farmers would all rush in and get rich. This \$20,000,000 is to be spent during a term of five years, at the rate of \$4,000,000, a year, and the expenditure is to cover the whole Dominion. This amount is to be supplemented by the provinces; they are to subscribe more than the Dominion Government itself. A partnership is going to exist between the Dominion Government and the Provincial Governments. I think that will be a good thing.

My honourable friend from the West (Hon. Mr. Willoughby) says that we have no right to step into provincial affairs. By the British North America Act, this Government may, or should, look after the good government of the whole of Canada—that is our inherent right. We do not trespass in this matter; the Bill provides that this arrangement is to be a matter of accord between the Federal Government and the Provincial Governments. If the Provincial Governments do not want the money we will not force it on them. What harm is there in the building of good roads? After a good crop they are the very best asset that a country can have; and the two work together.

Europe is ahead of us in this regard. France particularly has made great strides in this direction; Napoleon thought that the best thing to do was to build good roads, not only in France, but in the other countries that he overran. For many years France spent from 500,000,000 to 600,000,000 francs a year on roads, but the country was more than compensated by the number of foreigners who went there, especially the owners of automobiles, and spent their money and carried away with them an appreciation and regard for the country which no doubt helped her when she was brutally attacked by Germany.

The best thing that we can do for this country just now is to turn our attention to good roads—and why? Five millions raises a tempest in the Senate; but in the other House, where the direct representatives of the people are to be found, this Bill was adopted. Why should we not vote this money? We have no personal motive for opposing the Bill, and what is \$5,000,000 a year when compared with the subsidies that have been given to railroads? If we were asked for \$50,000,000 for the Grand Trunk Pacific railway, or any other big rail-

Hon. Mr. POIRIER.

way, we would grant it. We have granted it and more. The railways have had enough, honourable gentlemen. We have expended enough money on the Welland canal and other canals—over \$100,000,000. It is time to turn our attention now to good roads; and yet a tempest is raised over the proposal to spend \$5,000,000 a year.

Let us pass this measure. It is essential for the good of the country, and it is one of those money Bills with which we should not interfere. We must reject it or pass it. I say let us pass it. We began the session well; we have done good work. Let us finish it well. Let us not sign our own condemnation by refusing a little bit of money for something so essential in this country as good roads.

I was asked in the lobby which side I was on. I had not heard the discussion, and I regret it now, but I said emphatically that I was in favour of doing something for the provinces. It matters not to me whether it is the farmers or the returned soldiers who take the pick and shovel in hand; what I am concerned about is the building of the roads. Better roads should be built, and we here in the Senate should help the Government to build better roads throughout the Dominion.

Hon. G. D. ROBERTSON: Honourable gentlemen, without any desire to take up the time of the House unnecessarily I will speak but briefly upon this important question, as it has a very important bearing on the labour situation this year, and will have for some little time to come.

The question of good roads has been before this and other parliaments on various occasions. I do not think that there is any difference of opinion among the citizens of Canada as to the desirability of having as good highways as are possible. The only question which should weigh in our minds is whether or not at this time it is proper and right to expend the money. In that connection, before dealing with the other side of the question, may I point out that the amount which it is proposed to expend, namely, \$20,000,000, extending over a period of five years, means an expenditure of 50 cents per head per year. The interest upon that amount during that time would amount to approximately 2½ cents per head per year. Is it worth 2½ cents to each citizen of Canada to have good roads, which will enable the farmer to get his produce to market, and will enable the citizen to purchase farm products at lower prices? Is it worth that to enable the farmer of the West more