

Supply—Northern Affairs

Mr. Benson: I do not think this item is specifically attached to that program. There was an acceleration started last summer in the building of Indian residences and so on. One million dollars was provided in the previous estimates during the year for this purpose and this is the provision of an additional \$500,000.

Item agreed to.

DEPARTMENT OF NORTHERN AFFAIRS
AND NATIONAL RESOURCES

5e. Contributions to the provinces, pursuant to agreements entered into with the approval of the Governor in Council by Canada with the provinces, to assist in the development of roads leading to resources, \$600,000.

Mr. Howard: This item deals with the so-called roads to resources program and because of the time element I want briefly to put in a plea once more for the Stewart-Cassiar road in British Columbia. During the time the Conservative government was in office it was originally agreed that this road would be financed on a 50-50 basis with the province of B.C. to the extent of a total of \$15,000,000 over a period of five years, with a maximum of \$1½ million contributed each year by each of the governments. Toward the end of the five year period, which I think was about 1963, the government of Canada admitted that it had made an error in calculation so far as the time element was concerned and agreed with the province of British Columbia to extend the time of the contract from five to ten years.

I submit that the government of Canada, because it entered into a commitment with the government of B.C. in 1958, should have admitted that it made another error, one with respect to the estimate of cost, and inasmuch as it agreed to revise the time factor within the contract from five to ten years it should also have agreed to extend the cost factor and continue its contributions on a 50-50 basis with the province until the completion of that all important north-south access highway. When the federal government decided not to make any further contribution once it had reached its maximum of \$7½ million, construction of the highway stopped at the edge of a creek in the wilderness and the road was left not maintained and without any construction on it for a good two seasons. This was a shameful way to treat the hopes and aspirations of people in the north who looked forward so much toward the completion of the highway.

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It is also true that the provincial government was at fault in the matter because it did not continue the construction program for those two seasons, but it has since embarked on the construction and completion of that highway on its own. However, it will take a longer period of time for the province to complete the highway by itself. I submit that the government of Canada has a moral obligation. It made a moral commitment in 1958. True, it was a government of a different political stripe from the one we have now but it made a moral commitment to the people of B.C. that it would assist in the financing of the construction of the Stewart-Cassiar road to its completion.

It made an error with respect to computing the time which was adjusted. It also made an error with respect to estimating the cost which was not adjusted. Once again I make an appeal on behalf of those people in B.C. who are vitally interested in the early completion of this road and on behalf of British Columbians generally that the government re-assess its position and reinstitute this roads to resources program so that we in B.C. can benefit to the extent promised in 1958.

Mr. Peters: Mr. Chairman, when the original estimates were before the committee I asked for a designation of the various projects going on in northern Ontario and the minister agreed to provide me with that. However, I have not received it yet. I suppose I could insist on the designation now, but if there are projects going on in northern Ontario I would appreciate it if a list were sent to my office.

Mr. Benson: I shall undertake to bring this to the minister's attention.

Item agreed to.

The Deputy Chairman: May I ask the minister if we are also to approve the remaining items under Northern Affairs and National Resources?

Mr. Benson: Yes.

10e. Contributions to the provinces, pursuant to agreements entered into with the approval of the Governor in Council by Canada with the provinces, of amounts equal to one-half of the amounts confirmed by the provinces as having been spent by them for campground and picnic area developments, \$100,000.

• (5:20 p.m.)

Mr. Herridge: What is done by the federal government to check the work that is done by the provinces? I ask this question because