

Trans-Canada Highway Act

Table 6

Summary of Canada's commitments for additional 40 per cent contributions and payments made 10 December, 1949, to 24 January, 1959.

Province	Additional 40% commitments	Payments made
Newfoundland	\$ 3,603,238.57	\$ 1,156,633.12
P. E. Island	1,109,863.11	360,218.65
Nova Scotia	3,945,000.00	769,929.52
New Brunswick ..	7,465,843.36	4,039,018.72
Ontario	12,675,575.00	3,060,622.07
Manitoba	1,629,478.25	557,967.00
Saskatchewan	1,985,145.00	1,321,283.20
Alberta	3,088,490.40	2,151,184.35
British Columbia ..	10,887,038.20	3,205,629.19
Total	\$46,389,671.89	\$17,122,485.82

This is a summary of the position at the present time with regard to the trans-Canada highway. I believe that the completion of the highway will be one of the most important feats in the history of our nation. Coming from the west coast, it has always shocked me that when one wanted to drive east to visit relatives or to see central and eastern Canada and the maritimes it was certainly advisable, if not necessary, to enter the United States at the nearest point, drive as far as possible through the United States and then come back into Canada. This has been going on for many years. In fact, a few months after I became Minister of Public Works one of the officials was sent to Banff to work on the trans-Canada highway and he was advised by the people in the department to cross into the United States at the nearest point, to drive through that country until he got south of Banff and then proceed north into Alberta. At that time the trans-Canada highway was completed across the three western provinces except for by-passes and was just as good as any of the main United States highways but the public works department was so far out of date that it advised its officials to drive through the United States.

I may add that we are not doing that any more. You can now get in a car at Vancouver and drive on pavement all the way to Marathon in Ontario. You may have to go into the United States for a few miles in southern British Columbia. Much of the travel in that province, of course, would be on a provincial highway but it would be a paved highway. The trans-Canada highway is a first-class paved highway today all the way from the western end of Yoho national park through Banff national park and then certainly right through as far as Kenora. I am sure it will be completely modernized from there to the Lakehead within the next few months or just as quickly as possible. One reason for that is that it is vitally essential that that highway should be completed in order to prevent Duluth stealing all the business that should go to the lakehead.

[Mr. Green.]

The trip around the north shore of lake Superior will be one of the most spectacular trips on the continent and because of the huge suspension bridge over the Mackinac straits which lead into lake Michigan I believe that hundreds of thousands of United States tourists will drive to Sault Ste. Marie and will then have the alternative of driving right around lake Superior or right around lake Huron. There will be a tremendous advantage to Canada in the tourist business, let alone what it will mean to have a first class paved highway from coast to coast. This is a very encouraging picture, and we believe the trans-Canada highway will be of immense benefit to the nation. This additional grant is required in order that the federal government may comply with its obligations under the new agreements with the nine provinces.

Mr. McWilliam: I am sure the committee thanks the minister for his statement and his review of the Trans-Canada Highway Act since it first came into force. He has told us what has been done in that regard up until now and what the intentions are for the future. This resolution, standing in the name of the Minister of Public Works, is designed to amend the Trans-Canada Highway Act to provide an increased grant. The resolution reads:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to amend the Trans-Canada Highway Act to provide that the aggregate of all expenditures under sections 4, 5 and 6 of the act may be increased to a maximum of three hundred and fifty million dollars.

The minister said this would mean an increase of \$100 million. The official report as of March 31, 1958 shows that payments to provincial governments up to that date amounted to \$155,716,617.76. The grant in the main estimates of 1958-59 amounted to \$45 million and the estimates for the present fiscal year, 1959-60, show \$48 million. This will mean a total of \$248,716,617.76.

It can be assumed that the chief, and probably the only purpose of this amendment mentioned in the resolution is to seek an increase of \$100 million to bring the total grant up to \$350 million. The 1957-58 report indicates that, with the exception of Newfoundland, the other eight participating provinces will complete their construction by December 31, 1960. Of course, it remains to be seen whether or not that happens. Several provinces, I am sure, are finding it very difficult to finance their share of the expenditure. Judging from past experience since this act was first introduced into the house, this resolution and the bill based thereon will receive unanimous support from all parties.