

The only revenue possible from this proposed road would be by way of tolls. It is not a commercial proposition in any sense; it is simply a military road.

Again:

What should interest everybody is the nature of the agreement to be entered into. Its sole purpose would be to aid the naval and military situation of the United States in case of a conflict.

And again:

It is obvious that the road is not in competition with sea-borne traffic at all, and it can be of no value whatever except for military purposes.

And, finally, in the next column:

I need not discuss the peculiar views of such persons, but I would certainly direct attention to the fact that, having regard to the importance of the road to the United States in the event I have described, and the practically entire uselessness to Canada of such a road meanwhile, we may assume the United States will not put a dollar into the construction of that road unless there are assurances by somebody in Canada that the road will be made available for military purposes in time of war.

These statements having been not only made in this House, but also broadcast in the newspapers of Canada, I think that those of us who are convinced that this road would be of real value to Canada, apart altogether from the military imaginings which have been offered, should challenge such propositions as being entirely incorrect. I hope, honourable members, that we are not so obsessed with what we hear at this time about war, and the Polish Corridor, and impending disaster, as to be unable to consider some of our own local problems on their merits, and in their commercial and social aspects. I cannot picture British Columbia as a Polish Corridor. I cannot picture to myself any situation in which any military road, whether of fifty miles or fifty yards, would develop on this continent any condition comparable with those troublesome conditions existing in Europe at the present time. I would ask honourable members, therefore, to look for a moment at this question from the standpoint of the United States and the standpoint of Canada.

From my knowledge of the Alaska highway as part of the great proposed highway from South America clean through to Alaska, I would say that so far as the United States is concerned the military aspect is purely secondary, and was not at all in the minds of the people or the Government of that country when this scheme was initiated. I think I should point out that there are two factors that might give the military aspect more colour than is warranted. One is that those who were advocating the road in the United States would naturally offer to their own

people every possible reason for the advancement of the scheme, and if to some people the military aspect presents a good argument, it will, of course, be used whether it is the most important one or not. Another feature which has a bearing on this question, but which probably is somewhat misleading, is the fact that the engineering work of the United States Government is entirely in the charge of the War Department. When bridges or docks are to be built, or such works as the Boulder Dam undertaken, the only engineering organization to handle them is that of the War Department. To it is entrusted the task of carrying out any public work in the United States, whether its aspect is military or civil.

Alaska comprises a territory one-fifth the size of the United States. I took the trouble to go to the Library and look up the 1938 supplement of the Encyclopaedia Britannica for information in this regard. This territory, with an area of 590,000 square miles, has a population of more than 60,000. In addition, there is a tourist population exceeding 30,000 a year. The value of Alaska's production in 1936, the last year given, is as follows: fish, \$50,000,000; minerals, \$23,000,000; furs, over \$2,000,000. Furthermore, there are forests available with an estimated quantity of eighty-five billion feet, board measure, of saw timber.

Here is this vast empire with great resources, but, as yet, a small population. Would it not be most remarkable if United States citizens in that territory and in other parts of the United States were not unanimous in desiring the establishment of highway communication between those two portions of that great country? There is no need to conjure up reasons why such a road should be regarded as necessary. To say that it would be of no use for purely national, commercial, social or industrial purposes is to overlook entirely the local conditions and the geography of that territory.

In the next place I would call the attention of honourable members to the fact that the United States Government about the year 1930 took steps to promote the Alaska highway. This was not done by the Government of the United States alone. At that time the Premier of British Columbia, Honourable Dr. Tolmie, formerly Minister of Agriculture for the Dominion and a colleague of my right honourable friend opposite (Right Hon. Mr. Meighen), was very active in the promotion of that road. In those days we never heard a word from any quarter about military matters. In 1933 the American commission made a report. I have a copy of it in my hand. That commission had met on various occasions with