

to say to the government of British Columbia that if they will duplicate what we provide for the measure of rehabilitation of the road from Kitwanga to Hazelton, which was the contention advanced the other night, we shall be prepared to go ahead. I justify that solely on the possibility that the road may yet have to serve a military purpose.

I understand that on the Kitwanga-Hazelton section there is a road of sorts in existence, and that the work to be done is that of rehabilitation and bringing it up to a higher standard, with particular attention to a few short distances which under certain weather conditions are almost impassable. It was the intention of the government to bring the matter to the attention of the government of British Columbia. After all, for military purposes we have spent something like \$11,000,000—or will have spent it—on this stretch of road including maintenance. And when the war ends it is scarcely to be expected that the federal government would maintain it. It would then be the responsibility of the province, and the road will be handed over to the province without any expectation of repayment.

Mr. CRUICKSHANK: Is that the complete road?

Mr. CRERAR: The road as it is—as it will be completed.

Mr. CRUICKSHANK: What good will it be that way?

Mr. CRERAR: The completed road?

Mr. CRUICKSHANK: No; it is not completed.

Mr. CRERAR: I am speaking of the section we are completing. This road was built for military purposes. When the military need disappears the road is turned over to the province, without any expense. In effect, what happens is that, because of the military need for this road, British Columbia gets over 111 miles of completed road which cost over \$10,000,000, and we are not asking the province to repay any of it.

Mr. CRUICKSHANK: Well, why should they?

Mr. CRERAR: I am not suggesting that they should. I believe I have covered the information the hon. member wants.

Mr. GREEN: Will the dominion maintain the road until the conclusion of the war with Japan?

Mr. CRERAR: I will not attempt to make any prediction now as to what may be done

[Mr. Crerar.]

next year. There is in this vote an amount that our engineers estimate will be sufficient to maintain it for the present fiscal year.

Mr. CRUICKSHANK: I should like to ask a question. Probably the hon. member for Skeena would like to speak.

Mr. HANSON (Skeena): The explanation given by the minister seems to be satisfactory. He says they are going to complete the road, and he hopes they will have ways and means to fix up the gaps on the provincial highway. Probably we should not expect him to go farther than that.

Mr. POULIOT: I have no objection to that road. On the other hand I cannot see why nothing has been done in connection with an old military road between Rivière du Loup and Madawaska, through Edmundston, and so on. It is an old military road, part of route No. 2, and the government has not done anything in connection with it. For some time money was spent on the trans-Canada highway. The province of Ontario had millions upon millions of dollars, and the province of Quebec had very little. We are now at war. We have a military road in the east, offering the best outlet between the St. Lawrence and the state of Maine. We have as our ally the United States, and there is a good deal of traffic in that locality. When military trucks go to Halifax they pass that way, because it is the shortest route. It is protected, and I cannot see why something is not done for that route.

I now bring the matter to the attention of the minister. He is a broadminded man, and has already done some things at my request. They were not big, in themselves, but I appreciated them just the same as if they had been very big. I hope this time he will realize the importance of this connecting link between the St. Lawrence river, particularly the county of Témiscouata, and the county of Madawaska, from which the Minister of Transport comes.

When one of the minister's lamented colleagues was Minister of Labour, the Hon. Mr. Rogers, some intrigue was made to change the course of that highway. Mr. Rogers would not allow it. He understood the strategic importance of the road. His opinion was most valuable from a strategical point of view, because afterwards he was appointed as the one and only Minister of National Defence, at the start of the war. He had as much military experience in his own head as the three present war ministers have now. And for all those considerations I hope the minister will pay due attention to the matter, consider it and recommend it to his colleagues, for the best interests of this country.