

Maritime Highways

have spoken on similar motions, and on this subject generally, on many occasions both inside and outside the House.

I do not find it strange that the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Murphy) should take part in this debate. I think we are getting somewhere when members, other than those directly affected in the Maritimes, take part in the discussion of this subject. I subscribe to the thoughts contained in this motion. I am in favour of what my hon. friend has said in connection with the Shubenacadie crossing, and I agree with the formula he proposed in connection with the building of this route. I hasten to assure hon. members that we do not have any super highway in mind. This is merely to be a vacation trail in line with the modern trend to get out into the country, camping and moving slowly around the beautiful rocky coastline characteristic of the Bay of Fundy.

I presume this motion will be talked out, so there is no misgiving on that score, but there is a pertinent question I should like to ask of someone in the government. I should like to know what has happened to the report which was commissioned through the Atlantic Development Council. My information is that the federal Department of Public Works, through its offices at Fredericton and Halifax, agreed to carry out a study of this Fundy trail proposal and report to the Atlantic Development Council. It was expected that the report would be submitted in the fall of last year, but so far there has been no sign of it. I understand, through the grapevine, that the concept has been recommended as a good one and as a viable proposal. But that is all the information I have. This is one question which might be answered; the reply would give us an idea of the thinking of the government on this matter at the present time.

The hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie mentioned the position taken by the provincial governments. Well, the provincial governments concerned are interested in this project. I refer to the present and previous governments of both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. It is a tremendous undertaking, in terms of money, for them. Nobody is trying to hold a gun to their heads in this regard. The New Brunswick section of this trail would go around the Bay of Fundy. Picture entering Canada at the United States border, at St. Stephen, and then taking the beautiful vacation trail completely around the Bay of Fundy down to the tip of Nova Scotia. This is a 500-mile trail we are talking about.

As I say, no one expects the provincial governments, regardless of their political complexion, to fork out \$100 million. We want their support, and they have indicated their general approval. It is now a question of finding a means to proceed. Again, nobody is talking in terms of hundreds of millions of dollars for a new super highway. This proposal is not meant to take money away from the construction of other roads; we are hoping just to get approval of a start being made. The part in which I am most directly interested, the stretch of the Bay of Fundy from the Bay of Saint John up to the Fundy National Park, could be completed by using the device of increasing the park boundaries. The Fundy National Park is actually one of the smaller national parks. If the area along the coast were increased, the federal government

[Mr. Bell.]

would become responsible for the roads in the enlarged area. The National Parks Commission evidently has an unlimited amount of money to spend on projects in park areas. By adopting a device of the kind I have mentioned, we could make funds available to complete at least one of the parts of this highway.

With all this in mind, I call upon the government, either today or on a later occasion, to let us know its thinking concerning the Fundy Bay vacation trail proposal, specifically in connection with my suggestion that the boundaries of the Fundy Park be enlarged in order that the federal government might become involved.

There is one other aspect I wish to mention. Despite the lack of interest on the part of the federal government, in spite of the fact we have been obliged to go slow, people are gradually making their way through this country and cutting out, as it were, a trail of their own along the lines of the old Shepody route which existed many years ago. This was the old highway that followed the coast from Halifax to Saint John. Campers and young, energetic Boy Scouts are cutting trails there now. In spite of lack of interest on the part of politicians and the fact we have not been able to produce any concrete plans, the highway is going ahead. This is a good sign for the future.

• (1730)

I support the motion put forward by my friend the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave). I think his suggested 90-10 formula, which has been used in the past in respect of some roads in the Maritimes, is a good one. It should be followed for this type of highway project so as not to take away funds from other needed resource highways. In this way it would mean a great deal to the tourist industry. I hope someone will let me know what has happened to the survey undertaken by the Department of Public Works which was to be made available to the new Atlantic Development Council.

In closing, may I say that the Fundy vacation trail project has stirred the imagination of many minds for over 100 years. It is a great challenge for the provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. With tourism the big business it is now, this would be in the nature of a self-help program which would produce lucrative returns and certainly would be in the public interest. If it helped the tourist industry it would keep some of the promises made to these provinces at the time of confederation. It would be an impetus to employment throughout the Atlantic provinces. As I have done for nearly 20 years, I ask the support of hon. members for something that makes a great deal of sense to me.

[Translation]

Mr. Albert Béchard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, at the outset of my remarks on the resolution moved by the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave) which in brief, calls for 90 per cent participation from the federal government, I readily support him since the province where I live—especially the area where my constituency lies—has an urgent need of appropriate highways.

Considering the tremendous length of highways everywhere throughout the province of Quebec, on account of