

Mr. SIMPSON (Algoma): My hon. friend is undoubtedly aware that two or three routes have been suggested. Which of these routes would he favour?

Mr. HURTUBISE: The different routes have been outlined by the hon. member for North Timiskaming (Mr. Bradette). Naturally every one would like to see the road pass through his own home town. The hon. member for North Timiskaming urged that the road should pass through his district, and similarly I wish to have it pass through mine; but I have no hesitation in saying that hon. members on this side of the house are above politics in the matter and will leave the routing to the decision of the provincial and federal governments. We would accept their decision gladly and would like to see the work proceed immediately.

Mr. PETER HEENAN (Kenora-Rainy River): I would like to add to the remarks of the hon. members for North Timiskaming and Nipissing concerning the construction of a trans-Canada highway. Owing to the fact that the government has definitely promised to build a national highway I am disappointed that we have not heard some pronouncement concerning its construction. Undoubtedly during the last election campaign the present administration made definite promises with respect to the building of a highway through northern Ontario. The hon. member for Nipissing has referred to a statement made by the Minister of Lands and Forests for Ontario at a smoker held in the town of Sudbury during the last election campaign wherein he stated that the highway now under discussion was a federal obligation. The St. John Telegraph-Journal of July 1, 1930, contained the following statement made by the present Prime Minister at St. John, New Brunswick:

We say that the federal government under our administration will build a great national highway in Canada.

No statement could be more definite than that.

The London Free Press of June 25, 1930, contains the following statement made by the Prime Minister at Cobourg on the preceding day:

"A national highway for Canadians. A highway in Canada, not through some other country. A highway in which you can leave Cape Breton and arrive in Vancouver without going into any foreign land." Mr. Bennett declared that the undertaking must be accomplished by the hands of the federal government.

To my mind that statement regarding the building of a national highway is quite definite.

The Ottawa Morning Citizen, in an issue the date of which I have not been able to ascertain, published the following extract from a speech delivered by the present Prime Minister at Ormstown:

A national highway was required for agriculture, to connect the east with the west; to this national highway his party was pledged.

I could refer to many other quotations of a similar character, but I do not think I should burden hon. members. Undoubtedly they are fully seized of the fact that the Conservative party, the Prime Minister in particular, placed themselves definitely on record during the last election campaign to the effect that a national highway would be built at the instance of the federal government. I think a definite pronouncement should be made to ease the anxiety of the people of northern Ontario as to whether or not the federal government is going to build or assist the provinces in building a national highway. An announcement to that effect has not been made by the present administration.

I spoke on this matter at some length in the course of the debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne, and I do not propose at this time to repeat what I then said. But I think it is well that we should ask the government to make some definite announcement which would at least put an end to the anxiety of the people and also stop the political manoeuvring of a few persons in northern Ontario who have delayed the building of the highway for so many years. I think probably a brief history of the highway might be useful in order to enlighten some members of the house who may be interested in it.

My official connection with it commenced in the town of Dryden in 1919 when I became a member of the Ontario legislature. At that time delegates from every town and hamlet between Winnipeg to away east of the head of the lakes met and formed an organization known as the Central Canada Colonization and Highway Association. The president of the association was, and is to-day, a leading Conservative in northern Ontario. In fact he was the defeated candidate in the provincial election of 1919. If I took the time of the house to read the names of the officers of the association, hon. members would realize that most of them are leading Conservatives