

Trans-Canada Highway Act

every day travelling on a highway that was constructed in 1936 for light transports and passenger cars.

Some of the points that I am sure could be argued would be in connection with what we consider to be a trans-Canada highway. This highway at present is the only link that Canadians can use if they travel from east to west. I think there is some justification for asking that this highway be maintained, if not as a trans-Canada highway then as a secondary part of the trans-Canada highway in Ontario, particularly northern Ontario, where the distances are great.

The traffic is not going through a similar area when it goes over the present No. 11 highway route, to that through which it would go if it went over No. 17 highway through the Agawa area. While we appreciate the amount of money that will be advanced, and certainly agree that the advancing of this money to complete the particular link from Agawa to Nipigon is absolutely necessary, I believe some money should be given in addition to help create and maintain a second highway with specifications similar to those demanded by the trans-Canada highway through that part of the country.

This road is also receiving a great deal of winter traffic which imposes additional burdens on the province by the fact that the snow has to be removed. Heavy frosts go down into that highway. As long as the trans-Canada highway is going to be carrying heavy transports on an interprovincial basis, I think this is a justification for consideration being given to maintaining this as at least a temporary link on the trans-Canada highway, and financial assistance should be given according to that consideration.

Mr. Batten: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support the resolution we are now discussing. I should first like to commend the minister for the very comprehensive statement he gave on Friday, and also for the recent figures he gave, which were later than those contained in the report for the year ending March 31, 1958.

As everyone knows, the original Trans-Canada Highway Act became effective on December 10, 1949, and that act provided for contributions under three headings. First, there was a contribution on a 50-50 basis provided for new construction. The total under this heading, not counting the additional 40 per cent, up to March 31, 1958 was \$135 million. In my own province of Newfoundland the amount spent under this heading was \$9.5 million. This act also provided for a sharing on a 50-50 basis of the cost of prior road construction between April 1, 1928 and December 9, 1949. Under this

heading, up to March 31, 1958 the federal government had spent approximately \$9 million. Under this heading the province of Newfoundland received no contribution, for the simple reason that in that province there was no prior construction which could be included in the trans-Canada highway.

Under these two headings there was no provision made for construction in any province between December 9, 1949 and the date on which a province might sign the agreement. Therefore it was agreed by special vote to make contributions for interim construction. Up to March 31, 1958 this total had been approximately \$1.5 million. In my own province the contribution was \$156,000. This agreement, incidentally, was signed by Newfoundland on June 23, 1950. However, by the end of the 1955 construction season it became very evident that this trans-Canada highway would not be finished by the expiry date of the act, which was in December, 1956. For the nine provinces participating in the program only about 1,525 miles had been completed, or 35 per cent of the total. Up to that time the province of Newfoundland had graded 215 miles, but no paving had been done along almost the whole of the 600 mile route.

On November 14 and 15, 1955 a federal-provincial highway conference was held. It was pointed out at that conference that there was no province where there was no highway of any kind over more than 10 per cent of the route. This conference led to the Trans-Canada Highway Act amendment of 1956, under which the federal government was to pay to each province 90 per cent of the cost of 10 per cent of the total provincial mileage. On account of this 40 per cent additional contribution, the federal government had paid out up to March 1, 1958 about \$10.5 million. Up to January 24, 1959, according to the figures given by the minister last Friday, the total amounted to some \$17 million, of which Newfoundland had received about \$1,156,000. Under the 1956 amendment the total limit of expenditure was increased from \$150 million to \$250 million. The present resolution is to increase this amount from \$250 million to \$350 million; but the expiry date of this act still remains 1960.

In my own province the total mileage to be covered is approximately 568 miles. Included in this is 25 miles in the Terra Nova national park. Of the remaining 542 miles there are 35 miles paved, 221 miles built and ready for paving, and 286 miles to be built to trans-Canada highway standards.