

*Trans-Canada Highway Act*

knowing that most of the highway construction up there that is taking place along the trans-Canada route is being paid for by the federal government, anyway. This is the image that comes forward, which is abetted by the provincial politicians in our area. The member for Port Arthur in the provincial house, who has recently been in a bit of hot water for an optimistic statement in connection with a judicial matter, is also very free with his announcements in so far as culverts, bridges, and everything else are concerned.

There are usually about three stages in trans-Canada highway contracts. He announces all three stages. As a matter of fact, he makes so many announcements about trans-Canada highway contracts that I think everyone is confused. But anyone who drives over the trans-Canada highway between the Manitoba border and White River is more than confused. He is pretty well shaken up. It has got to the stage where you cannot politic in any decency. I know we had a riding association meeting last week in Nipigon, some 70 miles out of Port Arthur, and about 104 people managed to **make it from various spots on the trans-Canada highway.** But the main point that was made to me was, let us not have any more of those meetings if we are going to have our life and limb and property threatened by going over that highway. It is a terrible situation all the way from Port Arthur to Nipigon and from Nipigon all the way to White River and west of Port Arthur it is just tragic. As the hon. member for Fort William pointed out the other day, this was going to be the big link to enable trucks to fit in with the seaway development, tie in with Manitoba and give us cheaper transportation costs and help us to build.

I would like the minister to explain just what is the relationship of his department with the provincial department of highways. I would like him to explain why he cannot get them to move any faster, and why we have not a higher standard on the trans-Canada highway in our part of Canada.

Before he encourages the Prime Minister to go on television and talk about the possibility of further development of the trans-Canada, would he have the Prime Minister just take a drive from Winnipeg over to White River and examine the existing trans-Canada highway. I can tell you it is no prize. I know he would not want to blame his predecessors in that case, that terrible Liberal administration, because after three years in office the government ought to be able to get the provincial governments bugged

up. The only thing we know about the trans-Canada highway is that we have had a beautiful scandal down there. I am not going to raise scandals again; but three or four years ago, as the minister may remember, we had all sorts of charges and counter-charges. We even had a couple of contractors pay very large fines. That is about the main contribution the trans-Canada highway has made in our area. It has the worst record of detours, bumps, springs torn out that I have ever heard of.

One man in our constituency, a union organizer, who has to travel far and wide, told me that he is always getting representations from the international office because his car bills are so high. There is one highway that he hardly ever goes down that he does not lose at least a muffler or an oil tank, and this is the trans-Canada highway that the minister is so proud of.

I know there is a tendency, whenever money is being voted on projects in the area, for politicians to become sweet and fatuous, but I do not see how the minister can be either sweet or fatuous if he has ever had to drive over the trans-Canada highway in northwestern Ontario. It is no prize. I know he will restrain the enthusiasm for a second trans-Canada highway until he gets something going along this route. All sorts of construction work are being done, but at the rate it is going by the time those new projects are finished the ones that were at one time up to standard will be all shot. In the light of this, I think we should snuff out all the guff that we have heard about a second trans-Canada highway and concentrate upon that mileage that has not been completed. I am not speaking of the gap from White River east to Wawa or that particular area. We will assume that will be done this year. This provincial politician I have been talking about has been predicting its finish for the last four years. We have even had people in the Conservative party betting in all directions in the last few years as to how soon it is going to be finished. I am talking about the part that is theoretically finished now but is not up to trans-Canada highway standards.

Of all the misbegotten highways that anyone has ever driven, I think the stretch between the Manitoba boundary and White River is about it and yet it is one of the longest stretches in the trans-Canada highway. I notice that the railways, using freight rate terms, always refer to this part of the country as the bridgehead area, the big link they have to move goods through to get them from east to west. You really think you are in a real war bridgehead when you go over some of that road.