

TRANSPORT

TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY—RECONSTRUCTION OF NEW BRUNSWICK SECTION

Hon. Eymard G. Corbin: Honourable senators, while the honourable Leader of the Government was attempting to put himself to sleep at an early hour last night, I wonder if instead of counting sheep he perhaps counted the number of times I have risen in the Senate to attempt to find out from the government if and when they intend to contribute to the road rebuilding program in the Maritime provinces, especially in New Brunswick.

I ask this question in view of the fact that the Prime Minister did state very emphatically some years ago, in the course of a visit to Saint John, New Brunswick, that the New Brunswick portion of the Trans-Canada Highway urgently needed rebuilding.

Did the minister give himself enough time last evening to think about that? Perhaps if he had, he would be in a position today to give me an answer, which would be comforting not only to me but to New Brunswick senators who sit on the same side as he and, indeed, to all the people who have to use that terrible road in New Brunswick.

Senator LeBlanc: He would not sleep if he had to ride on that road.

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I mean no offence in saying that my last thoughts as I fell asleep last night were not of Senator Corbin.

Senator Lynch-Staunton: You wanted to sleep well.

Senator Corbin: Don't worry about me, think of New Brunswick. Think of what your Prime Minister said, and of his commitments.

Senator LeBlanc: That is his nightmare.

Senator Murray: The honourable senator wants to know whether we intend to contribute to that road building program, as he puts it. I hope there is no misunderstanding between us. The answer is yes.

Senator Corbin: When?

Senator Murray: An announcement is imminent, honourable senators.

Senator Corbin: Is it part of the slush fund we are voting for Treasury Board in view of election programs?

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, as I recall, there was an announcement contained in the budget of February

1992 relating to infrastructure, and quite detailed and intensive discussions have taken place between the federal government and the provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, as well as other provinces, on this matter. There will be a series of announcements in the coming weeks.

Senator Corbin: I would thank the minister. I think we have made some slight progress over the last five years.

Senator Murray: More than slight.

Senator Corbin: I am still anticipating the announcement to see to what extent the federal government is, indeed, committed to rebuilding the Trans-Canada Highway.

Senator Murray: If my friend has driven those roads as recently as I have, he will have observed that a good deal of the work is already under way, and notably so in his part of New Brunswick. It is just a matter of the federal government's sending a share of the cost.

Senator Corbin: I will acknowledge that there has been some progress. In fact, I was instrumental in starting this debate when I was an elected member of the House of Commons. I remind him of that. I did my job. You do your share.

Senator Murray: It certainly takes a long time. The last time I drove on that road in the republic of Madawaska was last fall, and the machinery was quite busy.

Senator Corbin: It so happens that was the worst section, and it had been neglected for a long time by a certain government which I will not mention at this time.

Hon. Philippe Deane Gigantès: I thought the leader of the Conservative Party opposite was a member of a government that maintains that everything was done by the Liberals. Therefore, if he started the work ten years ago, that is what happened.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

PATENTED MEDICINE PRICES REVIEW BOARD— TIMING AND CONTENT OF REPORT

Hon. Philippe Deane Gigantès: I wish to come back to the question of the drug legislation. Would the Leader of the Government also ask his colleague Minister Bouchard whether he had any inkling of what that report might contain before the introduction of the drug patent legislation here in the Senate?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I will convey to my Cabinet colleague all of the questions that have been asked on this matter in the last couple of days.