

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: On division. I do not know that anyone else is opposed to the Bill, but I want to go on record as being against it.

The motion was agreed to, and the Bill was read the third time, and passed.

BRITISH COLUMBIA-ALASKA HIGHWAY DISCUSSION CONCLUDED

The Senate resumed from Monday, May 8, the adjourned debate on the question proposed by Hon. Mr. Griesbach, drawing the attention of the Senate to a proposal for the construction of a military motor road from the United States boundary through Canadian territory to the United States territory of Alaska.

Hon. J. W. deB. FARRIS: Honourable senators, some time earlier this session I thought seriously of introducing a resolution on this important question, but as I thought it was mostly of interest to Western members, I felt that as a junior member I should not venture to bring it to the attention of the House. However, after the remarks of my honourable friend from Edmonton (Hon. Mr. Griesbach) the situation now appears to me to be somewhat changed. It has ceased to be a local or even a national question. The honourable senator has told us what, I presume, is the sole basis of his action. He states there is some apprehension lest this road, if constructed, involve us in serious international complications with our neighbour the United States, or, worse still, in a war with Japan, into which we may drag Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, England—in a word, the whole British Empire. If that be the situation, I have no hesitancy in discussing what he deems to be a grave national problem.

In his notice the honourable member states:

That he will draw the attention of the Senate to a proposal for the construction of a military motor road from the United States boundary through Canadian territory to the United States territory of Alaska.

I listened with the keenest interest to my honourable friend's opening remarks. He said:

Coupled with the advancement of the money necessary for the cost of construction is the further proposal that the road shall be made available to the United States in time of war, for the movement of troops and military supplies.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.

At the time I very humbly put to him this question:

May I ask my honourable friend who has proposed that the road should be made available to the United States in time of war?

He answered:

It is proposed in a Washington dispatch.

And he mildly reprimanded me in these words:

I do not see how anyone from that province can be ignorant of that aspect of the matter.

Well, for my part I am not ignorant of the fact that in some Washington dispatch such a proposal may have been made. My honourable friend in a later statement, referring again to this Washington dispatch, said that the question had been discussed in some newspapers in British Columbia. I am not ignorant of that, and other honourable members of this House are not ignorant of it; but I was ignorant of the fact that a Washington dispatch could be the basis of a serious discussion of threats of war and of international complications such as have been suggested.

Hon. Mr. HUGESSEN: And the Halifax submarine.

Hon. Mr. FARRIS: At least someone claimed to have seen that.

When my honourable friend (Hon. Mr. Griesbach) speaks again, in reply, he may have more information on the subject, but up to date there is not a single word, except some newspaper gossip, upon which to base this most serious proposition that we should refrain from the construction of this road because of the possibility that it may involve us in war with Japan.

So far as the discussion to date is concerned, I think that, having given a complete answer in regard to this cloud of war which was so graphically described, I might stop here; but the question is entitled to discussion on far greater and more fundamental grounds, and, with your permission, now that it is before us, I shall proceed to deal with some further aspects of the case.

The honourable gentleman, having based his contention on a dispatch by a reporter, whom we know not, in a newspaper which is not named, proceeds to bolster up his case by the suggestion that there are circumstantial reasons why this dispatch is probably true. The circumstantial evidence he offers is the statement that the road can be of no earthly use to the United States except for military purposes, and that it is of no use at all to Canada. I quote from four paragraphs of the honourable gentleman's speech as reported at page 316 of Hansard. First: