

*Trans-Canada Highway*

commerce, who has now gone to the other place. Later he said, as reported at page 2051 of *Hansard*:

I greatly sympathize with the hon. member for Edmonton East (Mr. Macdonald) in his endeavour to have the highway built over those swamps extending for 200 miles between Edmonton and Jasper. I have the greatest sympathy with him.

I now say that there are no swamps there, or none so far as the road is concerned. We have a highway between Jasper and Edmonton. I have travelled over it in my car. I know. Therefore that argument seems to fall to pieces. Then he said, as reported on the same page of *Hansard*:

The difficulty is that in the city of Edmonton and the northern part of Alberta members of my party, as well as other hon. members, all ran their election campaigns on one ground, namely, that the highway should not go through Calgary.

I have told my people right along that we should have a national highway commission made up of experts in the building of roads. The commission should include engineers who would know exactly what they were doing, instead of, as some other people have said, two-bit politicians who in many cases do not know the first thing about road building. I am still of the opinion that we should have a highway commission made up not of politicians but of roadbuilding engineers who know their business. I think Canada would get great benefit from that.

A little later, again at page 2051, the hon. member, speaking of a certain organization, said:

You can start at Winnipeg on any good-sized map and draw a line from Winnipeg through Saskatoon and on to Edmonton. They have an organization there which travelled from Winnipeg to Vancouver by road. They did it to prove it could happen. I must say the basis of their whole equipment was pull-outs and shovels, but they finally got through. I have no idea how long they travelled on the ties of the railroad, but they made it in the final analysis.

Again I think that statement is just as foolish as anybody could make it, because we do know that we have travelled from Winnipeg to Edmonton and Jasper on the highway. I have been over it myself. I know that the road is good. I did not have to travel on ties. I do know also that a caravan of fifty cars travelled from Jasper to Vancouver, leaving Jasper on Wednesday and arriving at Vancouver on Friday. I did not hear about any shovels being used on that trip, either. The hon. member for Edmonton East (Mr. Macdonald) can give us the information on that, if necessary, and we can find out if there were any shovels used.

The argument put up by the hon. member for Calgary West (Mr. Smith) fades away into thin air. I say again we should have a commission, made up of competent persons,

[Mr. Fair.]

to survey all the proposed routes, a commission which could make use of the best possible information. The Yellowhead route reaches an elevation of 3,717 at the highest point; the Kicking Horse, 5,337, and the Crow'snest pass, 4,450. Snowfall must be one of the drawbacks on any route chosen. As to the Yellowhead, I understand the greatest danger is at Blue river. On the Kicking Horse I believe there is a stretch of approximately 350 miles which is subject to very heavy snow in the winter months. No matter how well a highway is built; if it is under snow slides or heavy snowfall it is of very little use.

Construction costs on the Kicking Horse route would be higher than those on the other routes. I am doubtful whether it would be possible to have a four-lane highway over this route. The Yellowhead would pass mostly through wide valleys and the cost of construction and maintenance would be much less than on the southern route.

I believe a greater percentage of population would be found on the Yellowhead route than on either of the others. There are many purposes for which the highway should be used, and consideration should be given to these before any route is chosen. We have been told in recent days that we must spend hundreds of millions of dollars for defence. The Alaska highway would appear to be one of the great highways which could be used for purposes of protection in the event of attack. A highway through the Yellowhead pass would give access to the Alaska highway. At the present time we have a connecting route from south to north, and this could be used rather than the one suggested by hon. members who favour the southern routes.

Then again, the Yellowhead route would connect with the two ports of Vancouver and Prince Rupert. That is an important consideration, too. From the point of view of scenery we would have access to four national parks and five provincial parks. This would certainly be worth while from the point of view of tourist traffic.

An investigation into distances discloses that the Yellowhead pass route from Vancouver to Winnipeg is 1,747 miles, whereas by the Kicking Horse it is only 1,695, or 52 miles less than the route which is much easier to construct.

I do not feel that it is necessary for me to say anything further in this connection. In my view a start should be made. I do not think the government's proposal to pay fifty per cent is at all sufficient. I favour the suggestion made by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Low) that national