

on the farm. I would like to ask the leader of the Government if, when the estimates are prepared and brought before the House of Commons, there will not be an immense sum of money required to improve the national railroads of the country—something that must be done. I understand that it will take at least 50 millions to repair portions of the National railway, what is commonly known as the Canadian Northern railway system. That money will have to be borrowed along with the rest; but, as has been said in this House, there must come an end to borrowing; there must come a day when we will have to pay back. Where that money will come from we do not know; we are leaving that to the Finance Minister; but the amount required for the railways of this country during the coming season will be enormous; and I would suggest that if the Government have any money or can borrow any it will be best for them to put those railways in such a shape that they can carry the western produce to the seaboard. They cannot carry it safely to-day, as the honourable leader is well aware. Surely it would be better to put this money where there would be some return, and where it would be most needed.

Hon. E. D. SMITH: It seems to me that there are two questions involved in this Bill. First, do we need the roads badly? Do we need them badly enough to borrow the money to build them? Secondly, is the Dominion Government justified in borrowing that money and handing it over to the provinces? I think we are justified, because I think we need these roads badly. I believe that at this stage of our development these roads are more important than our great steam roads. We have spent hundred of millions of dollars on steam roads; surely it will not be a great hardship for this Dominion to expend during a period of five years 20 millions of dollars to help various provinces in furnishing feeders for those roads. Of what use is it to have steam roads unless you have feeders for them? And the ultimate feeder is the road that is used by our trucks and wagons.

It seems to me that we are justified in passing this measure as a means of increasing production in the country. I do not think we would be justified in passing it for any other reason. It is true, as many members have said that we are borrowing large sums of money and have to pay it

Hon. Mr. McMEANS.

back; but at no stage in a business is a business man more justified in spending money than when he is in dire need of making money. That is the position Canada is in to-day: we are in need of making money, and in what way can we do it better than in providing facilities for all the people of Canada to reach the near-by markets? The best markets in the world are near-by markets, and we need good roads to reach them. We might even be justified in spending this money for what may seem absurd, and what may be criticised—for the return that it will bring in the way of tourist traffic. The poverty-stricken state of Florida has more good roads than all the Dominion of Canada, and it built those roads for the purpose of attracting tourist traffic, from which it gets a revenue of over 60 millions a year now, and it is increasing at a tremendous rate every year. We are justified in believing that we have a more attractive country in summer for tourists from the South than even Florida has for winter tourists from the North; we certainly have a far more attractive-looking country; and we are justified in believing that if we had good roads like those in Florida we could attract an enormous tourist traffic. Since that State gets a revenue of \$60,000,000, it is natural to suppose that we would get sufficient revenue to pay interest on twenty millions anyway. As to whether the Dominion is justified in borrowing this money, the Finance Minister is a better judge than any one in this House. He has his hand on the throttle. He knows better than any one of us whether this country is justified in borrowing this money for the laudable purpose of hastening production. This Bill was passed in the House of Commons by the Government that has made a study of the question with great intensity from their point of view, and they say we are justified in borrowing this money for this purpose, I am satisfied there is nothing on which we could spend money that would tend to produce more in this country than good roads. In the province of Ontario, and I believe in other provinces, just before the war, a good broad system for the construction of better highways was started, but the war intervened, and the provinces are slow to take it up. The country needs these roads badly, but townships, counties and even the provinces do not feel justified in spending more than a fixed amount. If the Dominion can give them further assistance we will get more roads and better roads, and townships, counties and provinces will