

These figures, particularly the second, seem to be ridiculously low. However, I quarrel with them because in the fluxion of time those figures should be substantially increased. In any event, that is the reason the Shubenacadie River crossing has been considered to be a marginal matter and why there is no crossing over the Shubenacadie in the Maitland area.

In concluding my argument on this point, I would like to say that I do not care much for the figures involved or for the economic considerations that can be set down on paper in black and white. I have a hunch. The reason is that at one time East Hants was one of the great parts, not only of Nova Scotia, but of North America. The shores of the Shubenacadie River rang with the hammers of those building some of the greatest ships of all time. In fact, the largest four masted vessel, the *W. D. Lawrence*, was built in the Maitland yard. If you go to that area today, where the largest of all vessels of this type was built, you will find a peaceful meadow by the side of the Shubenacadie River. I believe in historical ups and downs of areas. They can have their periods of difficulties and then come back.

I suggest, and this is going to be a large part of any political arguments I ever make for the rest of my time in politics, by building a Shubenacadie River crossing, both the provincial and federal governments would not only be doing a vast service to that particular part of my constituency, but they would get a return many times over. Anyone who would go there and look at the prosperity which would flow from this project would feel they had taken a wise and statesman-like step.

Mr. C. Terrence Murphy (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave) upon the argument he has put forward for a crossing over the Shubenacadie River. It was an impressive argument indeed. If it is followed and accepted, hopefully the people of that area will know after whom to name that crossing. The hon. member cited a number of groups which support this concept. Although I was listening closely, I did not hear him mention the involvement of the provincial government. There is no doubt that that government supports it to some degree, but I would like to know what type of priority it attaches to that particular crossing. It seems to me that a bridge of this nature within a province is something which should be dealt with primarily, at least at the outset, by the provincial government involved. The initiative should come from the provincial government.

It is my understanding that there is an ongoing shared-cost program between the Department of Regional Economic Expansion and the Atlantic provinces, and that that program was negotiated with all of the Atlantic provinces. I understand it concerns itself specifically with highways and bridges. It is also my understanding that up until this time at least, none of the provincial authorities who are parties to this agreement have asked for either of the proposals which have been put forward by the hon. member. The hon. member may think it strange for a member from northern Ontario to become involved in a debate on a crossing of the Shubenacadie River, a debate which he suggests is on cost-shared programs between the federal government and the Atlantic provinces.

Maritime Highways

One of the reasons I entered this debate was to draw to the attention of the hon. member and the House the fact that it is not only in the Atlantic provinces that problems exist with regard to highways, bridges and so on. Very specifically, if the federal government is getting into this field, I would like it to take a look at Highway 17 as it wanders from Ottawa, through Sudbury and on to Sault Ste. Marie, which happens to be my constituency. I do not suggest that members of the government drive that route because the dangers are so great that it might well be these officials might never return to their work in Ottawa.

• (1720)

Just before the last Apollo moon shot, the Americans thought fit to send their astronauts into the Sudbury area to look at the landscape, which is supposed to be something like that on the moon, and to study the rocks and craters in that area. Even now, they are sending more of their astronauts there for the same purpose. There is no doubt in my mind that when these astronauts reach the area they will have no need to go into the districts surrounding Sudbury; all they will need to do will be to drive on the stretch of highway between Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie, where they will find craters the like of which they will never see on the moon. No one would dare take that route in a small car because he would get the impression, after descending into some of these craters, that he was driving in the Grand Canyon.

There is a bridge connecting Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario with Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan and during the summer tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of tourists use this bridge to drive across into Canada. If they turn left after crossing the bridge, and go west, there is a good highway to Thunder Bay. But if they decide to run left to take a look at eastern Canada, and travel over that part of highway 17 to which I referred earlier, their next thought is to get out of Canada as quickly as possible. Canadians who are attempting to cross Canada using Highway 17, which is the trans-Canada highway, flee into the United States as soon as they hit Sault Ste. Marie and continue the rest of their journey using the United States highway system.

So, it is not only in the Atlantic provinces that there are areas in which the federal government should be more closely involved. The federal government should review its position with respect to roads and highways throughout Canada. It is time we formulated a national highway policy, defining exactly the nature and extent of federal involvement in the construction and maintenance of roads, highways and bridges such as those referred to by the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave). All parts of Canada would benefit from a policy of this type. Each government would know exactly where it stood vis-à-vis the federal government. Each would know precisely what assistance it could expect. Hopefully, the federal government would become involved in such a way as to help develop a first rate road transportation system, one of which both Canadians and visitors could be proud as they travel from coast to coast across this country.

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Lancaster): Mr. Speaker, I want to support the motion in the name of my friend, the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave). I