

Trans-Canada Highway

1. The desirability of linking up the whole country in one unit from a transportation standpoint.

2. The most effective means of developing the country.

3. To provide a route that will make it possible and convenient for the tourist and trans-Canada traveller to visit the largest and most attractive area in the most convenient way.

4. The most economical way by which all of this can be accomplished. Almost any route that might be decided upon from east to west meets the first point raised.

Let me quote the Sudbury Star of September 17, 1930:

The benefits accruing to a municipality through having an aggressive board of trade have been aptly demonstrated in the vital question of the construction of the proposed trans-Canada highway, which has been agitating the northern Ontario centres during the last few weeks, and which is one of the most important problems affecting the vast stretch of country north of the Canadian Pacific Railway that has been in the public mind for a long time.

Without a board of trade, it is doubtful if any active steps would be officially taken in a matter of this kind. The project does not come within the province of a municipal council, although, if the latter were not over-occupied in purely civic problems, they might, in a measure, divert their attention to through roads.

He proceeds to explain the necessity of a trans-Canada highway. I rise on this occasion just to add a few words to what has already been said by the hon. member for North Timiskaming (Mr. Bradette). I want especially to emphasize that if we ask, regardless of partisan views, for the immediate construction of this trans-Canada highway, it is to relieve the unemployment situation which is so bad at the present time. In my constituency unemployment is becoming worse every week. I want to mention in particular the town of Sturgeon Falls, with a population of 4,000 which for twenty-five years has depended for its livelihood on the operations of the Spanish River pulp industry which is now the Abitibi Pulp and Paper Company. This company, however, closed its doors seven or eight months ago. Charitable contributions have reached their limit; the municipality can do no more; the provincial contributions have also reached their limit, and now it is the federal government's turn to step in and do something. Therefore I ask for the construction of this trans-Canada highway, mostly for the relief of the unemployment situation. I might congratulate the municipalities and the provincial government for having tried last fall to do something to relieve the unemployment situation. But what has been done for the relief of

[Mr. Hurtubise.]

unemployment in the district of Sudbury, particularly around Mattawa and Sturgeon Falls has been altogether impractical, and the methods which have been adopted were far from being profitable for the country. Large pieces of road have been built in the middle of winter whereas in the spring the same work could have been done in one-tenth of the time with one-quarter of the money. It is my opinion that such work should have been begun early last spring, because at such time it could have been done much more advantageously.

I have a further reason for suggesting the immediate construction of the trans-Canada highway, because the expense involved would be well justified. To my mind such construction would constitute a good piece of business. Referring to the tourist trade in Canada the Ottawa Journal of May 22, 1931, contains the following report:

In 1930 almost five and a half million United States automobiles crossed into Canada, and both Ottawa and Washington estimate that in the neighbourhood of \$400,000,000 was put into circulation in the dominion as a result.

Northern Ontario being a more undeveloped country, needs such a road for its further development, and at the same time that section of the country would receive its fair share of the tourist trade. Up to the present time many of the Canadian people have been under the impression that American tourists have come to Canada simply to quench their thirst. I think that is an erroneous view; the vast majority of tourists enter Canada to enjoy the beauties of our country. Undoubtedly a great many of them would be drawn to northern Ontario if the road now under discussion was built. Northern Ontario would share to a considerable extent in the \$400,000,000 referred to in the Ottawa Journal.

I shall not add anything further about the necessity for the construction of the trans-Canada highway, but would strongly urge the government to consider the matter and to take action immediately. The construction of such a highway is a vast undertaking and before it could be undertaken engineers would have to survey the whole route, which undoubtedly would involve a work lasting some weeks and probably months. If the route is not now decided upon, construction work may not be initiated this year. I hope the government will take immediate steps to decide upon a route, have it surveyed and give work to thousands of men as was promised during the election campaign.