

The Address—Mr. Hanna

trans-Canada highway. I would like, first of all, to commend the government for the action it has taken in co-operating with the provinces to bring about completion of a national highway from coast to coast. Surely, this is a project that has long been needed in this day of the automobile and motor transport. I am sure all Canadians will feel proud when the day arrives that cars and trucks can go from one end of Canada to the other on a first-class Canadian highway. And I make this suggestion to the government: that as soon as such a highway is completed, the necessary arrangements be made with the provincial authorities to have this highway marked and designated from coast to coast, Canada highway No. 1.

But I go further than that. I suggest that for reasons of national unity and national security the government adopt as soon as possible a more concrete national highway policy, and set up a national highway authority. One of the first aspects of such a policy would be the planning and building of additional national highways as soon as the first one is completed. On grounds of national defence alone such a policy is absolutely necessary. We are all very much concerned with the defence of Canada, and rightly so. But as someone very properly has said: "What is the use of spending vast sums on fire engines, if we cannot get them to the fire?"

Now I cannot suggest where the location of such additional national highways should be in the east. I will leave that matter to the hon. members from the eastern half of the country. But I do know that there is an urgent need for a new national highway in the west, from Winnipeg to Vancouver by way of Saskatoon and Edmonton, and through the Yellowhead pass, in the Rocky mountains. There are many good reasons why this route is an even better one than the route now under construction through the Rockies, but time does not permit me to dwell on them in the debate.

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, I hope the day is not far distant when the government will see its way clear to throw its weight behind the building of Canada highway No. 2 through the Yellowhead pass.

I would like to compliment the right hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) on his statement in the house on the wheat marketing situation. It was particularly interesting, in view of what we have heard from some other hon. members, to hear him say that Canada has never sold so much wheat so rapidly as during the last two crop years. And on top of all that, we in Canada are

[Mr. Hanna.]

blessed with another bumper crop of grain. I would like to give the wheat board credit for its long record of service to the western farmer. It is my hope that they will continue their most strenuous efforts, as I know they will do, to market the new crops as quickly as possible, and to the best possible advantage. There are a good many farmers I believe who find themselves in a tough spot because they cannot deliver more of their grain. However, I am satisfied that the majority of farmers are not looking for a handout, but for the opportunity to deliver their crop. I, for one, am convinced that the wheat board and the government are doing a good job in endeavouring to see that the delivery quotas are raised as soon as possible. And it is my hope that they will redouble their efforts in this regard, in order to relieve whatever hardships may exist.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to note in the speech from the throne that it is intended to amend the Municipal Grants Act. Of the three levels of government in this country none is so hard pressed as the municipalities. One might say that the recent prosperous times have brought many of them nothing but financial grief. While demands for essential services have increased by leaps and bounds, as in my own constituency, the municipal tax base has remained as restricted as before, namely to the real property tax. I believe the time has come for this government to grant to the municipalities the full annual amount of the taxes it would have to pay if it were not tax exempt. And this would not be just a gratuitous handout to the municipalities. In my view it is only the fair payment which this government should make for the services the municipalities give federal property—for example, police and fire protection, paving and road improvement, sewer and water service, and so on. This government should set the example to the provincial governments in this matter. When this has been done, I believe that the provincial authorities may be persuaded to follow suit, to the relief of the hard-pressed municipalities.

Many hon. members will have heard that our own province of Alberta is a debt-free province. Well, this is not exactly what it appears to be on the surface. It is not the whole story by any means. While it is a fact that our provincial government has a cash surplus in excess of its outstanding debt, the Alberta people, through their municipalities, are little, if any, better off than they ever were, from the debt-free standpoint.

Mr. Blackmore: That is not right.