

Trans-Canada Highway

if certain conditions appear to exist; and at the present time we are not in a position to say which, if any, of these conditions are satisfactorily established. I do not think we should be accomplishing much that would be useful if we were merely to deal with hypothetical cases. At the time we have this discussion we should be in a position to make a positive statement as to what we regard the situation to be. As soon as we have what appears to us to be sufficient factual background, we shall be glad to make that known to the house; and if at that moment it appears to be the desire of the house to have a discussion about it, we shall be glad to arrange for that discussion.

Mr. Drew: I do not wish to precipitate a debate, but I should like to indicate to the Prime Minister why I am raising this question. The occupation of so large a country by a certain type of government, even in what appears to be a civil war, may be an important turning point in the attitude of other nations to one of the big five at San Francisco. I am simply urging that in so important a matter, before Canada is committed to a course from which it cannot turn back, the house should, if possible, have an opportunity to express its opinion.

Mr. St. Laurent: We shall endeavour to do that if it is possible; but I should not like to make any firm commitment, because I do not expect that before the session prorogues there will be sufficient background to justify an attempt to bring before the house the material for a debate, and I should not like to undertake formally that nothing will be done during the recess of parliament if circumstances do develop more rapidly than we expect at the present time.

TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY**PROVISION FOR FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO PROVINCES**

The house resumed from Monday, November 21, consideration of the motion of Mr. Winters that the house go into committee to consider the following resolution:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to encourage and assist in the construction of a trans-Canada highway and to provide for this purpose that the Minister of Reconstruction and Supply may enter into agreements with any provinces providing for the payment by Canada to those provinces of contributions in respect of the cost of a trans-Canada highway; with provision also for the employment of temporary engineers, technical officers and other employees for the purposes of the act.

Mr. Robert Fair (Battle River): Mr. Speaker, it was not my intention to take part in this debate until I heard some of the speeches last night and arguments on the different routes

suggested. The fact that the hon. member for Fraser Valley (Mr. Cruickshank) raised the question which he did a few moments ago makes it all the more necessary that the trans-Canada highway be constructed at the earliest possible moment.

During past weeks there seems to have been quite a good deal of lobbying done on behalf of some of the other routes, particularly the Crownsnest pass route. I notice that circulars have been distributed, and a number of speeches were made last night in favour of that route. Near the end of the discussion last night in favour of that route, the speech of the hon. member for Lethbridge (Mr. Blackmore) buried the argument he had attempted to make. The hon. member buried his argument in snow, where his highway has been for the past number of years and will continue to be in the future. The hon. member said, as reported at page 2049 of *Hansard*:

The route that I suggest is close to the United States border and in case any particular section of it should be blocked by snow for three or four days it would not be a difficult matter to drop down across the line, go along the United States highway, come up the other side of the snow obstruction and go right on through. That advantage is not to be found in connection with any of the other routes.

I suggest to the hon. member for Lethbridge that when he made that statement he defeated any argument he might possibly have made during his detailed address, because he forgot to find out where that possible route is to get down south, and, again, where the possible route is to get back to his proposed highway. We understand that that highway would be very hard to build, and that for many months of the year it would be impassable because of snow. Therefore we can give that south highway a knockout blow and come to the Kicking Horse pass, for which the hon. member for Calgary West (Mr. Smith) put up an argument last night.

The hon. member for Calgary West started out by advising the Minister of Reconstruction and Supply that under no circumstances should he agree to a commission on the route of the trans-Canada highway. Mr. Speaker, in my opinion this is one of the most important matters that should be discussed at the present time, because I do not think that money belonging to the people of Canada will be spent in the wisest way by having things as the hon. member for Calgary West would have them. He said that the highway could go through Calgary. Later he said that the matter had been settled some time ago. He referred to the former minister of trade and