

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion***PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION**

A motion to adjourn the house under provisional standing order 39A deemed to have been moved.

TRANSPORT—BRITISH COLUMBIA—FEDERAL CONTRIBUTION TO BURRARD INLET CROSSING

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I asked the Minister of Transport for some clarification regarding the press release which he issued dated March 15. I should like to quote part of that release:

A third crossing of Burrard Inlet is under active consideration at the present time and the question of federal participation in this project has been raised on a number of occasions.

It is understood that the preliminary estimates placed the cost of the new crossing at about \$85 million. A part of the cost would be occasioned by the requirement to avoid any obstruction to navigation in the port of Vancouver and a part of the expenditure would provide easier and more efficient access to the wharves and the new National Harbours Board facilities on the waterfront, both in Vancouver and on the north shore.

The government of Canada is prepared to make a capital contribution to the project which would reflect obligations which are essentially national rather than local in character. In addition to a capital contribution the federal government would be willing to guarantee a loan to be floated by an appropriate local non-profit harbour crossing authority, provided suitable arrangements were made to ensure the payment of interest and the repayment of the capital of the loan spread over a suitable period. If such an authority is established by the provincial and local authorities, the federal government would be prepared to enter into discussions without delay with a view to getting the project launched as quickly as possible.

Now, the part of the press release which seemed to me exceedingly vague was this sentence:

The government of Canada is prepared to make a capital contribution to the project which would reflect obligations which are essentially national rather than local in character.

I was hoping I could secure from the minister some idea of what the federal government is actually prepared to do.

It so happens that at the same time that the Minister of Transport was issuing his release here, the Minister of Labour issued a release in Vancouver, a copy of which I obtained from the office of the Minister of Labour, and it is almost in identical terms. However, in the press conference which followed the issuing of this release the Minister of Labour was not

[Mr. McIlraith.]

quite so reticent, and the press report which came over the wire was as follows:

The Minister of Labour, Mr. Nicholson, says the federal government is willing to pay one third the cost of building a bridge tunnel across Vancouver's Burrard Inlet to ease traffic congestion across the Lions Gate bridge. Mr. Nicholson added that the government was also prepared to finance the rest of the \$85 million cost with a 50 year loan.

Mr. Pickersgill: Would the hon. gentleman give the source of that quotation?

Mr. Douglas: This came over the C.B.C. on the television news last night, and I got a copy of it from the C.B.C.

An article in this morning's *Vancouver Province* reads as follows:

Mr. Nicholson is reported as saying that the federal government was prepared to contribute \$20 million or more plus long term deferred interest loans for the construction of the crossing. He is quoted as saying that the federal grant could go as high as \$30 million.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is a good deal of interest in what exactly is the federal government's proposal. If the statement attributed to the Minister of Labour is correct and the federal government is prepared to contribute one third, which would be roughly \$28 million—and the provincial government has already indicated its willingness according to press reports to put up \$27 million—then this still leaves \$30 million to be raised.

I assume that the federal government would be prepared to lend this amount on a long term basis, but I think that the problem which would face the local authorities on the lower mainland would be to find the sources of revenue available to them to retire a debt of \$30 million at the rate of interest that they speculation in the *Vancouver Province* to the would be expected to pay. There is some effect that the federal government is going to ask for 25 per cent of the gasoline tax in the metropolitan Vancouver area to pay off this loan. The public is entirely in the dark as to what the proposals are, and I think it would be much better if the whole thing were brought out into the open so we all know what each government is prepared to do.

I recognize that the minister cannot be too definitive and that certain negotiations have to take place. But it would be helpful if, instead of saying that the federal government's contribution will reflect obligations which are essentially national, the federal government is prepared to say that they will contribute one third or one half of the amount required, and will tell us how they propose to help the local authorities meet the problem of retiring a