

*Trans-Canada Highway Act*

**Mr. Browne (St. John's West):** Is that in order here?

**Mr. Bourget:** Why not?

**Mr. Browne (St. John's West):** I can answer that, Mr. Chairman, if the hon. member wishes.

**Mr. Bourget:** Is Quebec in Canada? As representatives of Quebec are we not entitled to speak on behalf of those people? What are hon. members trying to do here, suppress the views of our population?

**The Deputy Chairman:** Order. The hon. member for Levis has the floor.

**Mr. Browne (St. John's West):** Mr. Chairman, speaking to the point of order, the hon. gentleman is straying from the resolution under discussion. If the hon. gentleman reads it he will find he is out of order.

**Mr. Bourget:** Why am I straying? Quebec is part of Canada, is it not? After all, it means millions of dollars for us.

**Mr. Spencer:** Read the resolution.

**Mr. Bourget:** I have read the resolution.

**Mr. Spencer:** The hon. gentleman read the wrong form.

**Mr. Bourget:** No. That money is voted by the federal government. Quebec is as much entitled as any other province to benefit from the money spent all across the country.

**Mr. Spencer:** That is for Quebec to decide.

*(Translation):*

**Mr. Bourget:** I have here a record of the proceedings when this matter was dealt with in the Quebec legislature early in March, and I find that the provincial minister of highways attempted, probably to confuse things, to give a few reasons to justify the refusal of the province of Quebec to share in the construction of the highway. And among the reasons mentioned by the minister, there is not a single one has to do with provincial autonomy. They deal solely with matters of procedure and details.

May I add, Mr. Chairman, that in the 11 years that this project has been going forward, I have never heard a member of this house, from any party or from any province, complain about the way the federal government had handled the provinces with regard to this scheme. I ask the Minister of Public Works whether, since his appointment as minister, he has received any complaints from the provinces with respect to the treatment they have received from the federal government.

Personally, I had the opportunity, when I was parliamentary assistant to the minister of public works, to travel to western Canada, where I had the pleasure to meet the four provincial ministers of highways, and they all told me that they were fully satisfied with the good relations existing between their respective governments and the federal government with regard to this plan. From what I was told, there appeared to be the highest degree of co-operation in the matter. This shows that similar relations might have existed with the province of Quebec if it had really wanted to share in the plan.

It is quite difficult to figure out exactly how many millions of dollars the people of the province of Quebec are losing because of the stubbornness of their provincial leaders, but on the basis of the total length of the trans-Canada highway, 4,500 miles, excluding the province of Quebec sector—I find that the length of the highway within our province represents about one eleventh of its total length. Well, one eleventh of the \$400 million spent on this project by the federal government is \$36 million. That is the amount the province of Quebec is now losing in this case.

And that is not all; we hear now of the construction of a highway that would cross Montreal from east to west. There again the province and the city of Montreal stand to lose many million dollars because this highway could certainly be part of the trans-Canada highway.

I realize that under the present legislation, it might be impossible for the province of Quebec to recover the millions it could have obtained, either as payment for sections of the highway previously built between 1928 and 1949, or for other sections of the highway built since 1949 to date. But I believe it would be easy to amend the act, and I am convinced that not one member in this house would object to an amendment that would allow our province to recover its part of the amount spent on the construction of this highway.

This is perhaps the last opportunity the province has to share in this program, and I hope it will not let it go by.

I hope the ministers who represent the province of Quebec in the cabinet, and the other members on the government side will finally realize, as their former leader, the Hon. Mr. Sauve, did so well realize, that we must stop being dupes in our own country.

*(Text):*

**Mr. Winch:** I should like to ask the hon. member a question.