

construct. In Quebec there are hundreds of miles of good provincial highways built by that province, and there is only a link of not more than 150 miles north of Maniwaki to give direct communication to the northern section of northern Ontario. So I repeat that all the provinces should be interested. Once the thing is an accomplished fact—and the undertaking will cost more than it should if the routing is not logical—it will be too late to criticize. This is the time to consider the situation not in a parochial or regional but in a national way. That is why I should like to see a general discussion of the whole matter by all the representatives of all the provinces, because I repeat that we are all directly interested in such an undertaking.

I have no quarrel with the southern section of northern Ontario. Their battle is their own. If they can show they have a better case than we have; if they can show the provincial or federal government that the road should be constructed through their section, all well and good. But then it becomes a local matter whereas the construction of such a road is not a local but a national question. As regards the routing of the trans-Canada highway even in northern Ontario, the provincial assemblies should be consulted; every province in this confederation should have an interest in such a matter. Perhaps some will say that it is now too late in the game for this. It is not too late, because it will take five, six or ten years more before the trans-Canada highway in northern Ontario is finally completed. There are questions of cost, of the country it will traverse, of mileage, of where it should go, of what would be the best routing so far as tourists are concerned. One argument advanced by the good people of the southern section of northern Ontario was that the highway should be constructed closer to the United States border so that more tourists from there might be attracted. That argument, however, will not stand the light of day, because we are building a road, not for the people of the United States, but for those of Canada. In this regard we should apply the Canada first policy. I repeat: The most logical, the most economical and the proper routing of that road is in the northern section of northern Ontario.

Last summer in Calgary the Prime Minister put the situation very well. I have not before me the newspaper reports of his observations, but I believe he said that the road should go via North Bay over the Ferguson highway—he omitted the name of Cochrane—but mentioned Hearst; but at the same time the Ferguson highway takes in the towns

of Cochrane and Haileybury. I was delighted at the words of the Prime Minister, because he gave the impression, at least in our section of the country, that he was fully aware of the geographical and physical situation. I was also highly pleased at the comment made a day or two afterwards by the present Minister of Labour when he gave an interview which appeared in the Ottawa Journal, saying that he was delighted at the words of the Prime Minister; that the Ferguson highway was the logical routing for the trans-Canada highway. But a few days afterwards we had very strong protests from Fort William, Port Arthur and, more particularly, Sault Ste. Marie. We then had the Premier of Ontario saying that no decision had been reached; his statement was almost to the effect that the Prime Minister of Canada had no right to make such an assertion; that the routing had not yet been decided. As a representative of the northern section of northern Ontario I began to believe that the people of the southern section of northern Ontario being greater in number than we are in the northern section, regardless of what the cost or mileage will be, the routing would be through the southern section and apparently, by the estimate that I have in my hand, millions of dollars have already been spent in the southern section. I am mentioning these facts not for political advancement nor for any other political purpose, but that the Canadian people may be fully aware of the situation, and that the problem, which is not local but national in importance, may be dealt with in a national way. If I had the time I would read to the house some comments made in regard to the matter by some independent newspapers. They give statistics and prove by facts that the most economical and the shortest route would be in my section.

Some people have said that we have no population yet. I stated a few minutes ago that our population had within recent years increased 800 per cent, and I think I am not going too far in prophesying that within twenty years the Porcupine, the James bay and Hudson bay district on the Ontario side will have an increase of 10,000 or more prosperous homes. The same thing will apply to the Kapuskasing district. There is bound to be an improvement in the mining and agricultural districts in the north country. In north and south Timiskaming we have what is known as the clay belt, and in my view it would maintain at least a million more population. We have other areas which hold potential resources.