

Northern Affairs

paving six miles through the rapidly growing town of Fort Nelson in order to alleviate the dust problem there. There are 2,500 people in Fort Nelson now, so that the extra paving will be welcome to provide assistance in dust control. Twenty-five miles of paving is also to be laid at a section of the highway around Whitehorse, where expansion is increasing beyond expectation. The metal industries in two areas around Whitehorse increased their output from \$43 million in 1965 to \$141 million two years later. By 1970 it should reach a quarter of a billion dollars.

It is expected that heavy trucks will be travelling the highway to Whitehorse every ten minutes, so considerable attention must be given to improvement of the highways in that area. Our government has also co-operated with our American friends to improve Haynes highway through the provision of snow removal equipment. We therefore find that the future of northern development depends to a large extent on close co-operation with the people of Alaska.

My purpose in reviewing these facts is to bring to the attention of the house the heavy involvement of the federal government in the improvement and maintenance of the Alaska highway. It is evident there is a great deal of merit in considering future negotiations for capital cost, which would place some responsibility on the shoulders of the United States government. Were we to abandon the involvement of our federal government in the development of the highway, is it not reasonable to expect that insurmountable barriers could arise? If it is the intention of this bill to place the operation of the road in a corporation other than a crown corporation, it would not, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, be fair or proper to expect the federal government to foot the bill.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pringle: I do not believe the bill goes far enough in connection with the terms of reference applied to the proposed corporation. No estimates are included which would enable the house to judge the amount of funds which would be required for capital costs in the immediate future, and no figures have been submitted covering maintenance costs.

I also believe that the reference to funding the required obligations is unrealistic. The cursory review I have made would suggest that a great deal of money is likely to be required. While the suggestion made with respect to bond and debenture issues appears to

indicate that considerable thought has been given to the problem by the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Thompson), I cannot but feel that the federal treasury would be petitioned for the major portion. If this is true, then it would follow that control of the spending of the money should remain with parliament.

In my opinion there is a valid argument that the time has arrived when all governments benefitting from the Alaska highway should get into the act.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pringle: It would appear feasible that the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta, working in close co-operation with the federal government, should become increasingly involved, from a financial point of view.

I do not mean to suggest from my brief remarks today that I see no merit in the bill. Indeed, I believe that the importance of arterial highways to the development and progress of Canada, especially in remote areas, is greater today than at any time in our history. Great strides have been made in highway construction in Canada during the past number of years, especially in western Canada. The great farming areas of western Canada are requiring industrial expansion as never before. Technological exchange has kept Canadian farmers abreast of the times in farm automation. Although I quickly agree that farm earnings are not adequate, it is my considered opinion that there is nothing wrong in the farming industry of Canada that expanded markets would not quickly cure. In fact, Canadian farmers have been producing to a surplus position instead of a consuming market for as long as I can remember. Food production has expanded through the encouragement of government to over-produce, to the point where today it has reached an exceedingly dangerous level.

• (5:40 p.m.)

During these early days in the twenty eighth parliament of Canada, I have heard many references made to the concept of family farms. I have been dealing with family farmers for years, and I heartily agree that they epitomize a way of life which is hard to beat. I also believe that well operated, efficient family farms will not disappear. I do not believe that bigness alone is a requisite of success. If this were true, Mr. Speaker, then the large department and mail order houses would have closed the smaller merchants long ago. What does all this have to do with a highway? I shall continue.