

(Text):

APPROPRIATION ACT

Hon. Donald M. Fleming (Minister of Finance) moved the second reading of Bill No. C-55, for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of the financial year ending March 31, 1960.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, is the minister not going to make a speech?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): No, Mr. Speaker, I shall follow the time-honoured practice of the house and refrain from making a speech on the second reading of an appropriation bill.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time, considered in committee, reported, read the third time and passed.

TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY ACT

AMENDMENTS TO EXTEND PERIOD OF PAYMENTS AND INCREASE MAXIMUM EXPENDITURES

The house resumed, from Tuesday, March 29, consideration in committee of the following resolution—Mr. Walker—Mr. Rea in the chair:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to amend the Trans-Canada Highway Act to extend until March 31, 1964, the period during which contributions or payments may be made to the provinces under the act and to prolong until December 31, 1963, the period in respect to which construction costs may be incurred under this act; and to provide also that the aggregate of all expenditures under the act may be increased to a maximum of four hundred million dollars.

Mr. Granger: Mr. Chairman, yesterday afternoon, at five o'clock, I had reached the point in my remarks where I was talking about the trans-Canada highway in my district. Within the district of Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador there are 151½ miles of trans-island road. Of this, 18.8 miles are paved; 36.4 miles are graded to trans-Canada standards, and 96.3 miles are ordinary gravel road. The necessity of paving is very apparent. Gravel road will not stand up to heavy traffic and the cost of maintenance is growing with every mile of new road built.

I mention these figures in my district to show, at least in one part of Newfoundland, how small a proportion of the road has either been brought up to trans-Canada highway standards or is finally paved. Since Newfoundland entered confederation I believe about 300 new communities have been linked up by a road system. Those communities, formerly isolated, now have the advantage of having road connections; but there are many other communities yet to be linked and, at the same time, the trans-Canada highway must be completed. The cost of building is very high. But, as I said before, the cost, is even

Trans-Canada Highway Act

more burdensome when the cost of maintaining new roads is added to the province's outlay on roads.

Trans-Canada highway is a heavy load for the province to finance. The province of Newfoundland is sparsely populated; the distance between settlements is often very great and the average income is low. Thus far trans-Canada highway has cost the province of Newfoundland approximately \$11,500,000. Taking everything into consideration, the number of miles built, the number of miles paved and the number of miles still to be brought up to trans-Canada highway standards, I cannot see how the road can be finished for some years yet. Under the 50-50 formula, my personal opinion is it would take from 10 to 15 years to complete the trans-Canada highway in Newfoundland.

Many tourists are finding new interests in the great new native attractions of Newfoundland, but the need for the completion of the trans-Canada highway stands between the tourists who want to come to Newfoundland and the prosperity of the tourist industry in our province. New adventures in the native attractions of Newfoundland await those who want to see the oldest part of the new world and the newest part of Canada. Money is needed to finish the trans-Canada highway in Newfoundland quickly. In order for the trans-Canada highway in Newfoundland to be finished quickly the old formula must be abandoned and a new, more equitable formula substituted.

It is in the interests of Canada to have the trans-Canada highway finished as quickly as possible. I do hope that the government of today will emulate the government of the past which made transportation the nation's business, and give the completion of the trans-Canada highway the same kind of thinking which created the transcontinental railways.

In conclusion, I should like to quote the following:

We should, and this government does, consider this newest of our provinces—

The speaker was referring to Newfoundland.

—as not a new province in the circle but as something special, something extra, because it can boast of being the oldest and most esteemed colony in the British Empire.

These words, Mr. Speaker, were spoken in this house last year by the present Minister of Public Works. I and all other Newfoundlanders appreciate his sympathy and his interest and we bespeak his making the completion of the trans-Canada highway in Newfoundland his personal responsibility.