

Trans-Canada Highway

school bus roads and rural mail delivery roads. Part of the construction cost of almost any road of any consequence whatever built in the United States at the present time is paid by the federal government.

The United States government divides its money in this way. It takes the \$500 million and it says that two and a half per cent of that sum will be used for administration expenses. Then it takes the balance and divides it into three equal parts. The first part is divided among the states in proportion to their population; the second part is divided among the states according to the area of each; and the third part is divided among the states according to the total road mileage within each one. That formula was adopted by the United States government in 1916 and has never been changed. That formula worked in the United States because, by means of it, they were able to build an excellent highway system throughout all parts of their country.

The state highway system in the United States reaches forty-two of the 48 state capitals. It reaches 182 of the 199 cities with more than 50,000 population. And in addition to the interstate highway, federal contributions are made for the construction of secondary and farm-to-market roads. On top of payments for the construction of these roads a large contribution is made by the federal government in the United States toward the construction of highways within urban areas. If the government of Canada would spend as much per capita on the building of roads as is spent in the United States we would spend in each year \$20,250,000 on federal aid to a federal highway system; \$13,500,000 on federal aid to the construction of secondary or farm-to-market roads; and \$11,250,000 on federal aid for the construction of highways within the large urban centres. The American formula has brought results. Under the Canadian formula if you take the highest possible cost for building a road through the province of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan will not obtain any more than \$1,285,700 a year from this government over a period of seven years.

If we take the state of Montana, immediately south of the province of Saskatchewan, we find that that state is much smaller in area than the province of Saskatchewan. Montana has 300,000 fewer people than the province of Saskatchewan. Yet in the year ended June 30, 1948, the state of Montana obtained \$10,586,873 for its highway program from the United States federal government, eight times as much money as the province of Saskatchewan can possibly get from the legislation that is being presented

to the house. The state of North Dakota got six times as much as the province of Saskatchewan can hope to get under this legislation within the same period, namely, \$7,271,913.

One of the important aspects of the program for road construction in the United States is directed toward making the highway system available to as many farms and rural communities as possible. I should like to quote one short paragraph from a publication of the public roads administration in Washington. It says this in relation to the highway program followed by the state of Texas in co-operation with the United States federal government:

Texas has been conspicuous for its speed and vigour in building secondary roads. Many of the farmers along the twenty-mile project in Armstrong and Randall counties had the contractor build spurs to their homes and barns. One farmer paid \$900 for his driveway, saying: "The road doesn't help you if you can't get to it." The Texas state highway department estimates that its secondary system, when added to the primary highways, will place 74 per cent of all rural homes within two miles of a surfaced road and 62 per cent within one mile.

That is what has been accomplished in the state of Texas through the federal formula used in the United States. Under the formula presented to this house this afternoon by the minister not one dollar of federal moneys will be used for the construction of secondary or farm-to-market roads. Therefore I say that while we welcome any contribution that the government may make toward the building of a trans-Canada highway, the contribution that the government has in mind in this respect falls far short indeed of the amount necessary to build a highway system to adequately serve all parts and all communities of Canada.

I wonder whether the government is seriously interested in proceeding with even paying 50 per cent of the cost of a trans-Canada highway. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott) made a statement during this session and I wish the Minister of Reconstruction and Supply (Mr. Winters) would find out from him for me what he meant when he made that statement. The statement was in reference to the building of a trans-Canada highway. He said that the magnitude and timing of works on the trans-Canada highway would depend upon the general rate of economic activity in Canada. I should like to ask the minister whether work on the trans-Canada highway is to be tied to the government's theory of cyclical budgeting. I should like to quote what I think is a most important paragraph in the circular sent out by the minister to the various provinces, or at any rate in the letter to the province of Saskatchewan, on September 2 of this year,