conference on provincial matters was held in Ottawa in November of that year. This conference was convened to discuss ways and means of accelerating the pace of work on the trans-Canada highway. As a result of this 1955 conference new legislation was introduced in parliament and on June 7, 1956, royal assent was given to a bill which amended the Trans-Canada Highway Act.

That bill provided the needed incentive for an accelerated construction program in that it provided that Canada contribute 90 per cent of the construction costs, rather than 50 per cent, on 10 per cent of the mileage within each province. This amendment also set the completion date forward to December 31, 1960, and increased the maximum limit which Canada would contribute from $150 million to $250 million.

I believe there was an interesting reason for this paying of 90 per cent of 10 per cent of the mileage within each province. The longest gap at that time was and still is in Ontario, along the north shore of lake Superior, and it worked out at about 10 per cent of the total mileage in that province. Therefore, shall we say, as a carrot to get that province to close that gap this new plan was worked out. The dominion would pay 90 per cent of the cost of 10 per cent of the total mileage. Since the federal government had done that for Ontario—by the way, there was a big gap in British Columbia and still another in Newfoundland as well—every other province had to get the same deal, so I suspect without exception they all picked out the most expensive 10 per cent highway construction in their provinces and they are getting 90 per cent of the cost of that particular 10 per cent.

Mr. Bourget: No one can blame them.

Mr. Green: No, I do not blame them a bit. New agreements were prepared based on the new act and the nine provinces who were signatories to the original agreements jointly signed them with the federal government. I might mention that these agreements specified that either the highway conform to the general specifications for the trans-Canada highway or else constitute a good standard of paved highway. Thus, where good sections of road existed, ones capable of carrying the present traffic, sound engineering practice dictated that they be left until their normal life was exhausted. However, where new construction or reconstruction was involved there would be no departure from trans-Canada highway specified standards.

From the time of this new act construction progress on the highway definitely accelerated. By March, 1956, or approximately six years after the original act, $225.8 million worth of work had been approved for construction. From March 31, 1956 to date, or approximately three years, an additional $236.5 million worth of work has been approved. In other words, during the past three years as much work was put under way as was done during the first six years of the original agreements. This is a very practical measure of acceleration on the project since the new act of June, 1956.

A large part of this accelerated work has gone into the gap sections which existed at that time. The major gap sections consisted of the Rogers pass route in British Columbia, the northern Ontario section from Marathon to Agawa, and the Newfoundland section from Port Blandford to Traytown. All of these sections are now under contract and they are all very expensive construction, by the way.

The gap along the north shore of lake Superior is very heavy rock work; it is very difficult for contractors to get in there and it is costing a great deal of money. The same, of course, is true of the Rogers pass in British Columbia, which is the pass that the Canadian Pacific railway used originally. They had so many snow slides and lost so much equipment and so many lives that they built the Connaught tunnel—I think it is under mount Macdonald—a five-mile tunnel, and abandoned their route through Rogers pass. The trans-Canada highway is going through that pass. The highway can go up and down and dodge the slide areas in a way that the railway could not do, and in addition they now have methods of setting off the snow slides by mortar fire. This is the method of getting the snow slides, or the avalanches started, shutting off the road in the meantime, getting the snow all down and then clearing the roads. That is the way it is supposed to work, anyhow.

Physical progress to date is generally satisfactory and during the next two construction seasons, which will bring us to the termination date of December 31, 1960, we expect to see a further acceleration in the construction rate. At the present time, out of a total of 4,470 miles in the nine participating provinces and through the national parks —this, of course, excludes the province of Quebec—3,090 miles of grading have been approved for construction with 2,781 miles completed and 2,196 miles of paving have been approved with 2,101 miles completed. In addition to the mileage paved to trans-Canada highway standards, there are approximately 950 miles of paved surface along the route which were constructed prior to the date of the act of December, 1949. This latter mileage is not necessarily to trans-Canada highway