

proof of it. I am quite ready to believe that the various provincial governments will take all the money they can get from the Federal Government.

I will conclude by repeating what I said a moment ago in that connection, that if the revenues of the provinces are inadequate for their purposes and we want to give them more money, let us give it directly by increasing the provincial subsidies. This measure is one which can very well wait until the next or some ensuing session. I do not think it is necessary for the purpose of providing employment, for the reason which I have already stated, that it would divert the present labour supply, to the disadvantage of the country. I will not speak longer on this question now, for at this late stage of the session it would be almost an impertinence for anybody to address the House at great length. For the reasons which I have stated, and for many other equally cogent reasons, which I have not pressed but which would weigh with me, I think this Bill should not pass.

Hon. ROBERT WATSON: I have watched good roads legislation for many years. I remember when the Good Roads Bill was before the Senate some years ago. There were in it some very objectionable features, which the Senate at that time removed. The question now is whether or not the present is an opportune time for the spending of this money in the building of roads. I agree in many respects with what has been said by the honourable gentleman who has just sat down, but so far as my province is concerned, I cannot agree with him, because we have in the province of Manitoba a good policy for the building of roads. The Manitoba Government and the municipalities throughout the province have entered into an arrangement whereby the province furnishes a certain percentage of the money required and the balance is provided by the municipalities. In Manitoba good roads are being built. The contracts are being let by public tender, and many hundred miles of roadway are constructed every year by the different municipalities.

I cannot agree, though probably I should not say so, with the Minister of Labour. The cost of living is at present of the greatest concern to the people of Canada. It appears to be the burden of everybody's thoughts. How is the cost of living to be reduced? You are not going to reduce it by building roads, because the labour that will be employed in constructing roads is labour that is required on the farms for the purpose of increasing production. I agree with the

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honourable member from Moosejaw (Hon. Mr. Willoughby) that farm labour is the scarcest commodity in Manitoba to-day, and the same is true of Saskatchewan. Labourers of the class that would be employed in the building of roads are demanding sixty or seventy cents an hour, and, in the province of Ontario, a few weeks ago, I think, Sir Adam Beck had to agree to pay 60 or 75 cents an hour to the navvies engaged on the work he is having done. The building of roads at these rates of wages is pretty expensive work, and for this reason I do not think this is an opportune time for road building. A few years ago the Government of Canada could borrow money at 3½ per cent; now it is paying 5½ per cent. When foreign labour could be had for 15 or 20 cents an hour, that was a good time, that was the proper time, to enter upon a policy of road-construction.

I concur in the suggestion made by the honourable gentleman from Moosejaw, that the reason why railroads are not being built to-day is because the railways cannot get the necessary labour. They can get the money and the steel, but labour is not available. I say that if the Government have money to spend on roads they should spend it on railroads instead of highways. Take, for instance, the Hudson Bay railway, which the people of Manitoba are very anxious to have completed. The Government of Canada up to the present time have spent over \$20,000,000 on the construction of that road and the terminals, and it is practically useless because there are 92 miles of steel yet to be laid. We are told that the Federal Government have on hand a surplus of money which they are prepared to give to the provinces for the purpose of building highways, and yet they have not sufficient money to lay ninety miles of steel on the Hudson Bay road to complete the enterprise and so it stands a waste to-day. It does seem to me that it is foolish to spend money on highways when there is greater need for railway construction, which is essentially a Federal undertaking, and when in the railway which I have mentioned twenty millions of the people's money is going to waste. There has not been a train run over that whole road yet, and in a year or two it will become necessary to replace ties that were put down four or five years ago. It seems to me that the Government are not well advised when they undertake to offer money to the provinces on the conditions stated in the Bill, for the construction of highways, instead of completing the roads they have already under-