

*Trans-Canada Highway Act*

of miles to build, some 550 miles in each case, or maybe a little more in British Columbia than in Newfoundland. Certainly I think it can be said without contradiction that the per capita income in British Columbia is far greater than that of Newfoundland and that the British Columbia budget is far greater than that of Newfoundland, and that British Columbia's ability to pay the cost of road building under this type of program is generally better than that of the province of Newfoundland. This is a factor which should be taken into account in developing a more equitable formula for sharing road building costs throughout the nation on projects of this kind.

So much for the financing. I have not developed any specific type of formula. That is something which I am sure could be worked out by the departmental officials without too much difficulty if the minister would in his kindly way, especially since he has now returned from a visit back home where he has looked at the crocuses and daffodils, just say to them: the hon. member for Skeena has what seems to be a good suggestion; just look into it.

**Mr. Green:** May I ask the member a question? Does he really think that this would be wise in view of the fact that the agreements are about to expire and that some provinces have already completed the work.

**Mr. Howard:** I am glad the minister raised that point. He must be psychic or reading my mind because I was about to deal with another aspect of road building to which a formula of this kind could be applied more readily than by any attempt to make it retroactive, especially since, as the minister has said, some provinces have already completed the work—Alberta has only six miles in the city of Calgary to go, Prince Edward Island has one mile to build which will be completed shortly, and so on. If this type of contract were to be applied from here on I do not think it would be objected to by those provinces which have completed or will be completing their sections of roads. It could more readily be applied to programs in the future.

We should not confine our thoughts as in the years past to the understanding that road building falls entirely within the hands of the provinces. We moved away from that thought in 1949 when the Trans-Canada Highway Act was enacted by parliament. Parliament then decided that at least in these circumstances the building of this particular road was a project for which the federal government should have a certain responsibility. We have moved in that direction and I feel it is time we went a little further in

[Mr. Howard.]

realizing there is a greater responsibility devolving on the federal government for participation in the cost of road building programs in the provinces.

There is also the question of additional so-called trans-Canada highways, if they can be designated in that fashion. The hon. member for Northumberland-Miramichi mentioned a second trans-Canada highway running through a portion of New Brunswick. We in the west have had in mind for a number of years the construction of a road which we have referred to as a second trans-Canada highway. We know in effect it will not completely traverse Canada but it has come to be known by this name as is the case in the maritimes.

The federal government should become involved in assisting financially in the construction of additional cross country or inter-provincial highways. It is not too early to begin to lay the legislative and administrative groundwork for participation with the provinces in this type of project on a broader basis involving increased financial contribution on the part of the federal government. There are other types of roads including north-south roads, roads leading to the United States, Alaska and the Northwest Territories in the cost of which the federal government should be prepared to participate. It should accept greater responsibility in sharing the cost of interprovincial and international roads.

We have in existence at this time a roads to resources program which is being developed under another department of government entirely with respect to financing yet I understand the engineering and technical part of it is being handled by the trans-Canada highway branch of the Department of Public Works. As we expand our program of participation in the construction of roads we should consolidate the programs in one group so there will be a general knowledge of what the left hand and the right hand are doing.

There is also a need for the federal government to move into the field of assistance to municipalities for the construction of inter-urban roads and projects of that nature. I suggest that we may be guided to a certain extent by the attitude in the United States. I understand that if it was not the Minister of Public Works it was one of his colleagues who made a rather extensive study of the extent to which the federal government of the United States participates in road building programs which goes back to about 1912 when that government began to participate in cross country roads, interstate highways, state, county, school and farm roads and practically every other type of road. The government there participates in the cost of nearly every