

Supply—Resources and Development

Mr. Wright: I should like to ask the minister what percentage this amount is of the total cost of building the road.

Mr. Winters: The total cost of the road is \$37,500, and this is the federal government's share.

Mr. Wright: Approximately one-third.

Mr. Winters: Yes.

Item agreed to.

382. Cranberry Portage road—to provide funds for the 1950-51 contribution to the cost of section B, Cranberry Portage to Cuprus mines, of the proposed road between The Pas and Flin Flon in Manitoba, in accordance with the terms of the agreement between Canada and the province of Manitoba, dated September 30, 1948, \$32,000.

Mr. Drew: Item 382 is in the same position as 381. It is not covered by any statutory provision and refers to an agreement. This is the type of provision in the estimates that has been under discussion before. Since there are various provisions for highway construction in which the dominion government has some participation, I should like to know whether these are the same type of agreements or whether they are special agreements, and the nature of them. It is not the amount; it is the practice that is of importance.

Mr. Winters: This is an agreement entered into between the province of Manitoba and the Dominion of Canada for a road into Flin Flon. The terms of the agreement were that the cost of the road would be shared on a fifty-fifty basis up to a total expenditure on behalf of the federal government of \$437,000. The \$32,000 shown in the estimates is the balance of payment on behalf of the federal government.

Mr. Drew: What I am interested in is why this provision for a mining road is not dealt with under the statute which deals with mining roads.

Mr. Winters: I know of no statute for mining roads.

Mr. Drew: There is assistance to mining roads.

Mr. Winters: I am told that to the best of the recollection of the officials before me there is no statute for mining roads.

Mr. Drew: I do not want to extend the discussion. There is a practice—and perhaps it is also covered by votes—of assisting mining roads.

Mr. Winters: Yes, there has been a practice, not by statute but by votes.

[Mr. Winters.]

Mr. Wright: What percentage is the \$437,000 of the total cost of this road for which assistance has been given by the dominion government?

Mr. Winters: As I said, it is supposed to represent half the cost of the road. I understand that the total cost has overrun the anticipated figure with the result that the province of Manitoba will probably put up more money as its share than it expected.

Mr. Wright: That is the point at issue. As a matter of fact the province of Saskatchewan agreed to build a road from Nipawin to Flin Flon in 1947, before the Manitoba government decided to build its road into this area. Saskatchewan spent half a million dollars in the construction of that road, building from both ends, but so far this government has not seen its way clear to contribute toward the cost of the construction of that road into this mining area.

Under the previous item, in connection with the construction of a road from Stony Rapids into Black lake, the minister stated that the share of the dominion would be one-third. I should like the minister to explain how he can justify giving assistance to one province to the extent of one-half the cost and to another province only one-third, and just why the province of Saskatchewan should be penalized as compared with the province of Manitoba in connection with the construction of a highway into the mining area of Flin Flon, when Saskatchewan was the first to commence construction of a road on its own account. It seems to me the dominion government should deal with the provinces on an equal basis.

Mr. Winters: Every effort is made to deal with the provinces on the same basis. Each project is different, and different circumstances exist. The project we discussed under item 381 was a three-way project involving a private company, the province of Saskatchewan and the federal government. Item 382 involves only two parties, the province of Manitoba and the federal government. That is why in one case there was a three-way split and in the other a two-way split.

Mr. Wright: The company did not enter into the contract in Manitoba? I can see that in that case the company might not be brought in, though the Black lake project was entirely for the benefit of the mines in that area. It was not intended to assist the general population of the area, because there just is not any population there at the present time. This is simply a road to move mining machinery into that area. Certainly the minister has not given an explanation that satisfies me as to why assistance should have been given Manitoba in connection with the construction of a road