

Bridge Construction

funds are available from the federal treasury at this particular time for this service, having regard to what the government has in mind in respect of the improvements on Indian reserves with relation to housing, school facilities, roads and transportation. In this regard I should like to refer the hon. member to page 2801 of *Hansard* of March 17, when the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources (Mr. Laing) dealt with his announcement of the reserve improvement program. In this announcement he indicates the government certainly is prepared to give aid in the very direction in which my hon. friend is requesting aid for the Indians of Walpole Island. I should like to read to the hon. member the pertinent paragraphs which I am sure he will find interesting. The minister said:

I am pleased to inform the house that an extensive Indian reserve improvement program to cost about \$112 million in the next five years, will be undertaken. Under the program Indians will receive assistance to provide better housing, safe water supply, sanitation facilities, electrification of homes and improved roads in their communities.

He goes on at page 2802 to say:

Transportation is of vital importance to provide access to and from reserves, for school children, employment opportunities and economic development. Improved roads on many reserves are a necessity. To this end some \$17 million will be spent in co-operation with Indian band councils and other levels of government.

So here we see earmarked, for the very purpose which my hon. friend wishes, a sum of \$17 million, already announced in the program of the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources.

Now, I wish to allude to a report given to me not long ago when this matter was under study.

Mr. Barnett: May I ask the hon. member a question before he alludes to the report? In the light of the statement he has just made in respect of the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, does he not think we should deal with this matter and enable the governor in council to use discretion in respect of whether or not this would qualify within the ambit of that program, and hope that the government at least would take a look at it, which is what the motion is asking?

Mr. Deachman: I believe we should deal with it, and that is precisely why I am on my feet at this moment.

Mr. Churchill: Are you supporting the resolution, because there are only five minutes

[Mr. Deachman.]

left; if you are supporting it, I would like to support it as well.

Mr. Deachman: I certainly have not said anything here this evening that would not be in support of transportation to assist Indians on reserves in Canada, and indeed that is the purpose of my remarks here this evening. I know the hon. gentleman and the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, share with me a desire to see that the transportation facilities on Indian reserves across Canada are improved to enable these people to gain a better livelihood and have better access to municipalities, in order to bring their children to school and to enjoy a better integration into the community than they are now able to have.

It is with this in mind that, as I said a moment ago before the interjection by the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Barnett), I wish to refer to a report entitled, "An Economic Survey of the Walpole Island Indian Reserve". This is a co-operative venture by the Walpole Island Indian band and the council of the St. Clair Regional Development Association. It is a very interesting report, and indeed a very able one. One of the things to which it alludes is the difficulties the Indians themselves find in obtaining jobs in or near the community of Wallaceburg where they must seek employment off the island if they are to improve their lot by obtaining employment other than merely agricultural or other casual employment on the island.

The report goes on to suggest that the people of Wallaceburg are not all too favourable toward the matter of employing Indians of Walpole Island. I should like to read the pertinent paragraph in the report, because I think it is of interest and is germane to the question of assisting the Indians in this particular area, so that the use of such a structure and road improvement would indeed be warranted. It says:

Because of this prejudice not many Indians are employed in Wallaceburg. The greater percentage work in Algonac where pay scales are higher. However, expansion in industry in Wallaceburg and along the Canadian shore might raise Canadian pay scales and may offer better jobs.

● (7:20 p.m.)

Then it refers to frequent complaints about carelessness on the part of Indians who are hired, and it states:

This carelessness must result from a great lack of interest in a job. It is unfortunate, but reputations such as these are thought to apply to all. Many industries in Wallaceburg have never hired Indians because of this poor image. These industries should be encouraged to hire a few Indians