

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Fourth Session — Thirteenth Legislature
31st Day

Thursday, March 24, 1960

The House met at 2:30 o'clock p.m.
On the Orders of the Day:

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

Mr. A.T. Stone (Saskatoon City): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day, I wish to draw the attention of the members to the group of students sitting in the Speaker's gallery. They are from the Mayfair School from Saskatoon, with their teachers, Miss Clements and Mrs. Haydon. I am sure all members will join with me in saying how happy we are to have them with us, and hope their trip here will be an enjoyable one.

STATEMENT RE PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

Mr. Speaker: — Before the Orders of the Day, I would like to give notice of two occasions which I am sure will be of interest to the members. They have no doubt been wondering when we were going to hold the annual meeting of The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. I am arranging this to take place on Thursday next, a week from today, at 6:00 o'clock p.m., which will be as early as we can hope to gather in the basement. This should be a particularly interesting meeting. There was, as hon. members know, a meeting of the Provisional Committee of the Canadian Area Conference in Ottawa, attended by Mr. Cameron and myself. We will give a report on that meeting. Then there is a Canadian Area Conference to be held at Winnipeg, or at least in Manitoba, this coming summer, and also recently our secretary, Mr. Stephen, has had correspondence in connection with regional area conference, that is, West Indian Federation Area Conference at Trinidad. All those matters will be included in the routine proceedings.

As in the past, there will be no written invitations, but I am sure hon. members would wish me to include our worthy Sergeant-at-Arms and his good lady at that dinner meeting. We cannot do our work without him, and I don't think we should play without him on a festive occasion, and this will be partly a festive occasion. So please bear that date in mind, Thursday next, March 31.

The second announcement I wish to make was at the request

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of some hon. members, I have got in touch with Mr. West, of West's Photographic Studios, and he will be here on Wednesday next, at this time in our proceedings, that is, before the Orders of the Day, and I am hoping the members will consent to a recess at that time, so that he can photograph us all in our seats. I am giving that notice in order that members will be sure to be present, if they wish to be included in the photograph.

MOTION RE COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM FOR HIGHWAYS

Moved by Mr. Thiessen, seconded by Mr. Woods:

“That this Assembly urge the Government of Canada to proceed immediately with a comprehensive program that will co-ordinate on a continuing basis the financing of long-term planning and construction of roads of national and international importance, and that financial assistance be made available to any province immediately that province completes its portion of the Trans-Canada Highway.”

Mr. John Thiessen (Shellbrook): — Mr. Speaker, in speaking to this motion as it appears on the Order Paper, I would like to spend a few minutes of the time of the House in going back just a little bit into history – some of it before my time, and some of it during my time. I would like to go back to the time the Federal Government of this Canada of ours was discussing and planning ways and means of creating a transportation system which would connect one coast to the other; which would allow people and other things to be transported from one coast to the other, and from one province to the other. This, at that time, could only be accomplished by a railway, and I would like to spend just a few minutes on the planning that was done in this regard.

First of all, the Federal Government had already built and constructed some railways, some in Manitoba, some in Ontario; for a transportation system to which they would build more lines. There was a grant of \$25 million made to the C.P.R. They were also granted 25 million acres of land near the railways which must, of necessity, be fairly good land. If it wasn't good land, they could transfer to some other lands within that vicinity which were good. They were given all the lands for their right-of-way; they were given the land for their station grounds, their workshops, dock grounds, water frontage and all the land which was necessary for the completion of their railway. They were also given the right-of-way to cross Indian reservations, in which they would do away with the title to that part of land which they needed for right-of-way. They were given permission to take stones and any other materials which were necessary

for the construction of their railway from Crown properties. This, and a lot of other things, were done to construct the first transportation system, which was originated in Canada. For this, the C.P.R. was supposed to construct a transportation system which would take care of transportation, not only for the beginning of Canada, or for covering the middle ways of Canada sometime, but this was supposed to be something which was going to be used forever, as far as Canada was concerned. It was planned that they would do all the transporting which was necessary.

This created in our province here, small communities from eight to 10 miles apart along these railroads; it created small stockyards to which you could haul your cattle; it created elevators, post offices, and many of these other little things which we require in local communities. The local problem was not too great in that most of the travelling was done by wagon and team. My dad tells me that his first travelling was done by oxen and wagon. The municipalities which were originated at that time didn't have too great a problem.

As time went on these things changed a little, and upwards to about 1914, my dad purchased his first model-T Ford car. This was one of the old cars with the brass radiator. I don't think there is a man today in this House, man or woman, who is any prouder of their 1960 cars than he was of his 1914 model. However, this 1914 car created some more problems. It created the problem of going to town with his car. the places where he could cross with a team and wagon, he couldn't cross with a car any more, so they had to do a little bit of slusher work, and they did that with two horses in front of a slip and they filled some of these holes. That wasn't too bad either. They got along with that, but in 1916, as many others did, the cars improved.

My dad at that time bought a 1916 McLaughlin, with all of 45 horsepower, and that car was modern. It would go up to 60 miles per hour. This thing created more problems for the municipalities, not only with driving in the local area, but they weren't too happy just driving to town or to Saskatoon. In 1916 my dad and mother went on a holiday trip all the way to Swift Current from Aberdeen. They took two or three days to get ready for this trip, and they made it a three-week tour. How long it took them to get there and come back, I don't know. I didn't go along with them, but I do know that a week or two ago I went along with a friend of mine from Regina to Saskatoon, and we pulled out of Regina about twenty minutes to give, and got into Saskatoon at seven o'clock.

I am not too sure, Mr. Speaker, whether our clocks stopped, or whether we broke the speed limit, but I do know this that my dad's clock in 1916 didn't stop, and I do know that he didn't break speed limits, either. He said in some municipalities you could travel easily, and in other municipalities you could hardly travel at all.

All these were problems which were getting harder and harder to solve, because cars were becoming more modern. Farmers in the days of

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the buggy and horse stayed at home when it rained because they got wet if they went out. These modern cars had a top, and all you had to do was lift it up, screw it up on top of your windshield, and put the curtains on, and you could travel in any kind of weather. So when it rained in the morning, they would put the horses in the barn, and away they would go to town. It created a maintenance problem. This didn't take too long until municipalities invested in fresnoes, which is a four-horse scraper, or should I say a four-hay-burner scraper. This is what we used to call them. We got \$4 a day for walking behind them, too. But it always seemed that we were just one mile behind the traffic which was created in the district, for people who wanted to go through.

Then in 1926-27-28-29, not only cars were on these roads, but trucks to haul grain from the threshing outfits to town, and those trucks used up the roads which were built by these slushers so fast that they just were no good. This brought municipalities to the point where they had to buy graders, and I know that our municipality bought its first grader, an old Stockland from Richardson Road Machinery, and they thought they could really build roads with this machine. They hired a man with a 110 horsepower steam tractor, and they paid him so many dollars an hour for operating, and they built roads, and said, "Now, we've got it beat." but the car manufacturers brought their cars down a little lower, widened out the tire a little bit, and did the same thing with the trucks, with the results that those roads were only good for just a few years.

Then we came to the position where the municipalities could not carry on insofar as their tax money was concerned, and it went up and up and up some more, for these roads and for maintenance and other things, so that the Provincial Governments finally stepped in and assisted the municipalities. The Provincial Governments finally established a road system of their own across which people could travel from one end of the province to the other, and from one province into the other. But if the railways, in my opinion, had kept modernizing their system, had fulfilled their obligations which they took over after all these grants had been made to them, that the national and international travelling which today is done on rubber, could have very well have been done on steel. But not having done that, it has been up to the municipalities, the Provincial Governments, and up to the cities and towns to see that roads are paved, and gravelled so that people can travel across these, and because our money from provincial and municipal governments is not sufficient, it is necessary for the Federal Government to come into a system of planning and construction and financing of roads.

Quite a number of years ago the municipalities realized they would never be able to keep up with the increase of transportation within the municipalities, and they came to our government and asked for some system of doing something with the municipalities that would keep them in operation. I feel that the Government has proven to the Federal Government that sharing can be done. Not only have we proved this in Saskatchewan, but we have a number of books and write-ups from the American

side that show that this is being done in other countries, that other countries are sharing with their lower levels of government to construct roads.

So, therefore, Mr. Speaker, because the C.C.C. Government has proven that the sharing of the costs of road construction as between municipalities and Provincial Governments is workable, and because traffic today is not only local, but national and international on rubber, and because taxable revenue of municipal and Provincial Government is not sufficient, and because the Federal Government derives quite a large sum of money from highways, I move the above resolution, seconded by Mr. Wood.

Mr. E.I. Wood (Swift Current): — Mr. Speaker, this matter of a national highway program is an important one, as outlined by the mover of this motion, and it is a motion which deserves our utmost support. As the mover has said, the road problem in Canada today has changed a good deal throughout the years, and is one of the major problems confronting us today.

I am quite prepared to admit that, according to the British North America Act, the roads of the province are a provincial responsibility, but any Federal Government which was prepared to sit back and let the provinces carry their own problem in regard to roads on the strength of The British America Act, saying it was strictly their responsibility, would be simply hiding their heads in the sand, because the advent of the motor car has entirely changed the situation today. In 1867, when the B.N.A. Act was written, the roads in any province would be the problem of that province, and of that province only, but today where we have so much transcontinental travelling, both for pleasure and for commerce, the roads of another province where anyone wishes to go, or to a province beyond that province, are of a growing interest to the people throughout Canada. I think that is a question that has to be considered and recognized by anyone who goes to look at this problem of an overall highway program for Canada.

There is this matter of our own internal traffic which must be served, and in being served properly, I believe it is a national rather than a provincial problem. Besides this there is the matter of the tourists coming into our country. I think the matter of tourist trade is a national one, rather than a provincial one. When tourists come into a province and buy things it is an assistance to the retail trade of that province, and if they are buying the products of that province, it helps also the people who are producing the goods. But when they are buying produce from outside that province, it is not only helping the province in which they travel, but the people in other parts of the nation who have made those things which they buy, and I think in this regard, the tourist traffic is not a problem of any responsibility of one province, but is a truly national one.

I think this matter of trade is one of more than a passing interest to the people of Canada today. You have only to read what Mr. Coyne has been talking about this past week or so, in regard to how serious is this matter of

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our national spending. I notice that in 1957, which is the last year for which I have a fair comparison, we bought \$689 million more than we sold. In 1958 we bought \$264 million more than we sold, but as I said before, 1957 is the last year for which I have a fair comparison. In that year, tourists spent \$363 million in Canada and of that \$363 million, some \$325 was spent by tourists coming in from the United States. That makes it appear to me that the problem of bringing these tourists across on international roads is rather an important one, because you can plainly see that any real improvement of our tourist trade would have quite a strong bearing upon helping us to balance our overall imports and exports.

In regard to this tourist trade, Mr. Speaker, we are not making a very good showing. I want to say that in 1957, when we had some 16.7 million people in Canada, those 16.7 million people bought, in the United States, some \$403 million, but the 171 million people of United States only bought some \$325 million worth of goods in Canada. Between 1948 and 1957, the amount of money spent by the Americans travelling in Canada increased by some 20 per cent, but the amount of money that was spent by Canadians travelling in the United States, increased by some 250 per cent. We are not holding our own in this business of the tourist trade. I think it is something that Canada has to wake up to, nationally more so than provincially. I believe it is something that concerns the nation, and not just the individual provinces of that nation. I believe the fact that the United States has for years been spending a good deal of money federally, upon building roads that are of national as well as of state interest, has a good deal to do with this matter of the tourist trade. Americans are not going to come over to Canada if they are going to travel around on a bunch of poor roads, when they have a good set-up for roads at home, and I think it is time that we started to look into some of these things.

Then there is the matter of defence, Mr. Speaker. I think we all recognize that roads and highways would be of importance during time of war, or any other national emergency. I sincerely trust, and I am sure we all here today, sincerely hope that we can evade war. I know it is something we must give all our interest and our support to try to evade any possibility of war. It is a must, as far as we are concerned, and yet it is rather apparent that we have to have some preparations along these lines, and if so, Mr. Speaker, I submit that we should pin more of our faith, and put a little more of our money into such things as roads, which we know are of use, and which would be of use in peace or war, and which would be of use in any kind of emergency, rather than spending so many millions of dollars in outmoded airplanes that are obsolete before they come off the assembly line, or in missiles which appear to be of very dubious value. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that roads are something we should be paying a little more attention to nationally, in regard to defence.

Then we have the matter of our national development. It is rather peculiar, but I think nevertheless, it is often a fact that our

greatest natural resources, the greatest and most important of our natural resources, are in those places which are thinly settled, in the hinterland, and if the development of those natural resources is going to be left to the resources, the money and finance of those thinly populated areas, it is not going to be good for the national development of Canada. Of course, in this line we have this Roads Resources program which has been brought forth by the Federal Government. It was possibly along the right lines, but it is not enough, and in this program, where a small province like Prince Edward Island is to get some \$7,500,000 under this plan, and where a province like Saskatchewan, which has such a vast hinterland, and such vast unexplored resources, stands to receive what would be to all intents and purposes, only \$6,250,000, I think that such a program is not well thought out. It is not equitable, and we have to have something of an entirely different nature, if we are going to satisfactorily develop the natural resources of our country.

Again we have the Trans-Canada highway. It was very good, and something which has been very much appreciated, so far as it went, and has served to prove how the provinces are able to work together on a program such as this. We in Saskatchewan have the distinction of being the first to finish our share, as we all know, and I think we have thereby shown to all of Canada that we are quite prepared to cooperate on any such program as this. But this Trans-Canada program, Mr. Speaker, did have some serious limitations. It just went east and west; it did nothing about the other very necessary roads which we need. This is a national concern, and this one thin ribbon of pavement going east and west cannot be considered a suitable and a complete national road program.

I noticed about a year ago the Hon. Mr. Green, who was then the Minister of Public Works, speaking in the House, had some rather harsh words to say about the Minister of Highways in British Columbia. He said that Mr. Gaglardi had approached him in an effort to obtain some \$15 million, asking the Federal Government to help them to participate and go half with them on the building of some \$30 million worth of roads in the province of British Columbia, which had nothing to do with the Trans-Canada Highway. Mr. Green pointed out that, while he was doing this, there was some \$35 million worth of work to be done yet on the Trans-Canada Highway, with which the Federal Government was prepared to help them, and he took a dim view of the fact that Mr. Gaglardi apparently went to the press, and said that the Federal Government, by refusing to help the Provincial Government in regard to these roads, was contributing to the unemployment of the province, and so on. Mr. Green thought that he should have gone ahead and finished their share of the Trans-Canada Highway. I think that Mr. Green possibly had a certain amount of an argument there, in regard to that, but does not the fact, Mr. Speaker, that these provinces had not seen their way clear to finish up these roads as quickly as they might have, tend to lend strength to the argument that there are other roads in those provinces which the Provincial Government considers to be more important provincially, than is the Trans-Canada Highway? And such an argument as Mr. Green put forth, has no strength whatsoever, when you are talking about such a province as Saskatchewan, which has completed its highways program.

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I feel what we need is something which is going to be on a continuing basis, and that will not be a hit-and-miss sort of affair that grinds to a stop whenever we get our share completed, and we have to wait for the laggards to catch up. We must have a program which will go on continuously and uniformly, well thought out, and something that will produce in this Canada of ours, a decent and good set-up of roads.

This problem of roads which faces us today and this matter I am talking about of what this resolution considers, a policy of road building on a federal-provincial basis throughout Canada, was considered very strongly in 1945 when the Dominion-Provincial Conference or Reconstruction convened in that year. The Federal Government's proposals included assistance to provide new access roads to underdeveloped mining and forest resources, assistance for the construction of transportation facilities of national importance, and a Trans-Canada Highway with international connections, and approaches to National Parks. They have in those proposals from the Federal Government a good deal of what we are talking about today, along the line of a national highway program. It was apparently accepted by the Government of that day that these were problems which should be squarely faced. But since that time, Mr. Speaker, in spite of the fact that we have constructed a good deal of this Trans-Canada Highway, which was more or less the outcome of this conference in this regard, the situation is even worse today than it was then. In Canada, in 1945, there was a total of 1,497,081 motor vehicles, and 16,842 miles of bituminous surfaced and concrete roads. At the end of 1958, there were some 4,719,474 vehicles, and 42,237 miles of bituminous surface and concrete roads. In other words, there were well over three times as many vehicles in 1958 as there were in 1945, and only two and a half times as many miles of hard-surface road. The number of our vehicles is gaining on the number of miles of hard-surface road.

If you look at what is said in the Report by the Gordon Commission, the Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects, you will see that of this number of vehicles, the number of heavy vehicles in proportion to light vehicles is on the increase, and besides that, the number of miles per vehicle travelled per year is also on the increase. So when you look at the whole picture, where the number of vehicles is increasing more than our mileage of roads, and at the same time the weight and the amount of travel of those vehicles is also on the increase, you can see that we are definitely on the down-grade since the proposals were put forth in 1945. The need was recognized at that time, Mr. Speaker, and I submit that it is even a greater need today than it was then.

There is a little point of interest here, as I was going through these statistics I found that, while the number of miles of hard-surfaced roads had increased by two and a half times from 1945 to 1958 in the Dominion of Canada, in Saskatchewan they had increased by over 14 times. I don't believe from that we can come to the conclusion that we are away ahead of the game insofar as the rest of Canada is concerned, but

I think it does point out that back in 1945 hard-surfaced roads were practically unknown in this province, and our rate of progress is satisfactory compared with other parts of the Dominion. We are actually increasing this type of road in our province a good deal more than has been done elsewhere.

I also noticed, Mr. Speaker, that the Conservative Government in Ottawa at the present time, when they were in Opposition, and out campaigning for their 1957-58 elections, were very much in favour of this type of thing. I am not talking about something here that I do not have support for from elsewhere. The Prime Minister, Mr. Diefenbaker, in 1958, speaking in Edmonton, at that time promised a second Trans-Canada Highway, and the Hon. George Hees, now Minister of Transport, in 1957, stated that Canada needed a national highway program for the development of the tourist trade, natural resources, and defence program. He said if the Conservatives were elected, they would start a Canada-wide highway program similar to that in the U.S.A. I submit, Mr. Speaker, it was time we stopped talking about this thing and started doing something about it. We know from past experience with regard to such programs as this, that there is usually and inescapably a good deal of a lapse of time from the time we start talking about these things, and start to do our planning in regard to them, before the first bull-dozer starts to move in regard to working out that program.

This motion before us today asks that such a program be instituted just as soon as any given province is through with their share of the Trans-Canada Highway. I concur with that in relation to ourselves, that we should start at once, but I would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that according to the 1956 amendments to this Trans-Canada agreement, it is due to close, to be finished on December 31, 1960, and here we are, just puttering around. We haven't even got going on a plan to take the place of this present program, when it is finished. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that the time is long past when we should be beginning to work on such a program as is before us in this motion today.

I also want to mention that in 1958, the Federal Government spent approximately the same amount on highways as what they took in on excise taxes on automobiles, tires and tubes, but this gives no consideration to the other taxes which were derived from the automobile industry and those who are working in it another way. I submit in that regard, that the Federal Government has been profiting at the expense of the provinces who have been building these highways, and the industry that is supported thereby. The taxes going to the Federal Government are not being returned in the proportion in which they are collected.

I would also like to point out, as we all know, that the tax-sharing agreement which is in force between the provinces and the Dominion Government at the present time is by no means a charitable program of giving money to the provinces. It is simply giving back to the provinces what is coming to them, because of their agreeing not to collect succession duties, corporation and income taxes. We are not, by this motion, Mr. Speaker, asking for a handout. It is not something along that line which is under consideration at all, but I feel that this motion is something that should be passed, and it is very important that we pass this motion

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to signify our acceptance and our willingness to co-operate with the other provinces, and with Canada in something which is of national importance, and a problem which is facing us today. Mr. Speaker, I take great pleasure in seconding this motion.

Hon. C.C. Williams (Minister of Labour): — Mr. Speaker, I am in hearty agreement with this resolution, but I would like to make a few remarks on transportation matters generally. Mr. Frank Hall, who is one of the outstanding Labour leaders in Canada today, and has done an excellent job of heading the 15 non-operating railway units in Canada over the years, is alleged to have made a statement recently to the effect that the abolishing of the Crows' Nest Rates could provide railways with sufficient revenues to pay increases to employees. I would not agree with Mr. Hall in this respect. He came out to England as a young man, and has always lived in the east. We can overlook the fact. . .

Mr. Speaker: — Will the hon. member please confine his remarks to the motion.

Hon. Mr. Williams: — Yes, I am just coming to that, Mr. Speaker. One more sentence — we can overlook the fact that he has always lived in the east and hasn't got the western viewpoint. Farming in the prairie provinces is a depressed industry, I think we all realize that, and cannot afford to pay any higher transportation costs on grain than at the present time. Railways have done very well over the concessions granted them in early years, and the low rates on grain at the lake head must remain, I think we must all agree to that. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, there is no reason for railway employees to be kept on wages less than what is provided for other industries.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Order! The hon. Minister has not touched this motion yet.

Hon. Mr. Williams: — I'll just skip the next part then, Mr. Speaker. I thought I had something of interest to this House but will just get past where I was referring to the Crow's Nest Rates. I want to mention the fact that the reason for railways having lost a tremendous share of their revenues, is, the loss of traffic to airways, trucks and buses. If we had to, we could get along without air travel or even trucks and buses, although they have their place and are a part of the country's economy. I am not suggesting, of course, that we do away with any of them, but I do suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we could not do without the railways which are the arteries of this, or any other nation. Obviously, they cannot operate into every hamlet, and village in the country on a weekly or tri-weekly basis, and here is just where other services are justified. The country could not, however, exist without the railways transporting both products, such as fuel, grain, livestock

and other heavy commodities, just about everything on the highways, (and we have been talking quite a bit about highways this afternoon) would result in transportation chaos and choke our roads to such an extent that travel by the general public would be almost impossible.

A solution would be, in my opinion, to give the Transport Commission authority over all commercial transportation, whereby traffic would be divided in the best interests of our country, and in the interests of the transportation companies, themselves. In this way railways could get back some of the revenues they have lost, and be able to pay their employees proper wages. I repeat. . .

Mr. Speaker: — Would the hon. Minister begin to discuss the motion.

Hon. Mr. Williams: — Yes.

Opposition Members: — I think the hon. member is on the wrong motion.

Hon. Mr. Williams: — Very well, I will just say, Mr. Speaker, that I feel the answer is a subsidy from the Federal Government, and will just close by saying that I feel it is most important that financial assistance from the Federal government be provided any program immediately its portion of the Trans-Canada Highway is completed.

I will support the motion.

Mr. A.H. McDonald (Leader of the Official Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, it is not my intention to prolong this debate at any length. I am a little confused now as to which debate I should take part in, the one that is on the order paper, or the one the Minister of Labour was speaking on.

Premier Douglas: — You spoke on that one two weeks ago!

Mr. McDonald: — I would suggest that was the time my hon. friend should have been taking part in the debate, and not today. However, Mr. Speaker, I feel that the mover and the seconder of this resolution have placed most of the material on record which I feel ought to be placed there. I cannot say that I am in complete agreement with all of the statements made by either of the Speakers, but I want to assure this House that as far as I am concerned, and I am sure I speak for my colleagues as well, I am in complete agreement with the body of the resolution, that is, calling on the Government of Canada to make further agreements with provinces such as Saskatchewan, (and Saskatchewan is the only province that could qualify at the moment) and to continue to plan highway improvements after the Trans-Canada Highway has been completed. We are in agreement with that policy. We also agree that Canada's constitution places responsibilities for highway construction on the provinces, but I am one of those who believes that this country has progressed since Canada's constitution was drawn up, and probably from time to time we should

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take a look at the division of responsibility, not only between the Dominion of Canada and the provinces, but also between the provinces and local governments. I sincerely hope that the mover and the seconder, and all of those people on the other side of the House, will have similar thoughts in mind when, from time to time, the municipalities of this province ask for similar treatment from the province of Saskatchewan that we are now asking from the Government of Canada.

I sometimes wonder, when I listened especially to the seconder this afternoon, if he can recall the facts that certain provincial responsibilities, with respect to roads in this province, and with regard to highways, have now been handled on to the municipalities.

Opposition Members: — Hear! Hear!

Mr. McDonald: — Certain highways, marked highways, have been taken out of the highway system and handed back to municipalities. Secondary highway systems have been handed back to the municipalities. In our opinion, this is a retrograde step, and in our opinion ought to be rectified just the same as we are attempting to do with the resolution that is now before us.

I doubt very much the remark of the Minister of Labour just now, (and I could not agree with him) that we could probably do away with trucks, buses and airways. I doubt that very, very much.

Hon. Mr. Williams: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I didn't say anything of the kind. I said I wasn't suggesting for a moment that we should do away with them. My remarks were all out of order, and I think perhaps his are out of order, too.

Mr. McDonald: — I will withdraw the remark, Mr. Speaker, because I wouldn't want to be out of order to the same degree as the Minister of Labour was out of order, and I am not going to suggest that by the Federal Government coming into a new agreement with the province of Saskatchewan, it would help in the increase in wages to railway employees. I don't think this resolution has too much to do with that. But I do agree that times have changed, and I think the Government of Canada has some responsibility, despite the fact that our constitution states otherwise. I think for the good of this country that the Government of Canada must plan an active part in providing adequate transportation systems, not only across our country, but into the vast mineral areas and into the recreational areas, not only of Saskatchewan, but of all parts of Canada. I doubt very much if the revenues that are available to Saskatchewan or to many of the Provincial Governments are such that we can cope very much longer with this problem, because of the ever increasing number of vehicles on our roads, and the ever increasing number of trucks and heavy equipment.

I want to assure you that we will be most pleased to give our support to this resolution.

Hon. J.T. Douglas (Minister of Highways): — Mr. Speaker, I didn't intend to take part in this debate because the mover and seconder did a very excellent job in placing before us the reasons why we should have federal aid for highways, but in view of remarks made by the Opposition Leader, I am afraid that I cannot allow some of his remarks to go unanswered.

I notice he refers to the treatment which we have given to the municipalities, and intimated that we were not giving our municipalities the same treatment from provincial funds that we are asking from the federal people for federal funds. I want to point out that the last year for which I have the figures, we did spend something like 137 per cent of the entire amount of money which we have collected from the Road Users' taxes on highways and roads, and of that share, something over 25 and 30 per cent of that money went to our municipalities. Unfortunately I find I haven't got the figures here that represent the amount Ottawa collects from sales tax, excise taxes on cars, trucks and other motor vehicles, nor have I the amount which accrued to the federal treasury because of import duties on foreign cars entering this country, all of which can be considered as highway users' taxes. I also find they are charging sales and excise tax against fuel oils and gasolines, which are used on the roads, so that they are collecting very large sums of money from this source, and they are not spending it themselves, nor are they spending on provincial roads an amount equal to what they are collecting from the highway users. So it is a much different story as between the treatment which the Federal Government is handing out to the highway users of this country, than that of this province where we are spending much more every year on roads and highways, then we are getting from the highway users' taxes.

There is another point, while I am on my feet, that I would like to bring to the attention of this Assembly, and that is the need for federal aid, and the immediate consideration of federal aid. I do not want to see a repetition of what took place here when the Minister of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources announced their northern roads program. We announced the northern roads program without first consulting with the provinces. I would gather he did not even consult with his own officials, and I say that after having discussed this matter with some of his officials. As you all know, it has been a rather haphazard method. In fact, I do not know whether or not they have signed that agreement themselves, but I do know this, that in spite of what the Minister of Northern Affairs and Natural Development said, when I signed with him an agreement for the Prince Albert bridge, there was no question whatsoever of the cost of that bridge being included in the northern roads development program, and of course, as you all know, that is now being done — they are now deducting the cost of that bridge from the money which they will spend in the northern development roads.

Mr. McCarthy: — They haven't come across yet.

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Hon. Mr. Douglas: — I would think so, but as I dealt with that a short time ago, I don't need to deal with that again.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — We're used to that, now.

Hon. Mr. Douglas: — But I want to say this, that I am hoping that the representations that we have been making to the present Government at Ottawa over the last several years will eventually be listened to, and that they will call in for consultation all the provinces of Canada, and discuss with them a program of federal aid for highways. As has been pointed out here this afternoon, it is long overdue. We are the only important country in the entire world without a national road program, and I say it is a disgrace to Canada that we haven't got one.

I am very glad to know that we have the support of at least one phase of the Opposition, in this resolution which I think is a very well considered one, and one which I would be glad to know we can present to Ottawa with the full recommendation of this Assembly.

The question being put, it was agreed to unanimously.

On Motion of the Hon. Mr. Douglas (Weyburn) the Assembly then adjourned at 9:55 o'clock p.m.