

# NO ESTIMATE GIVEN OF COST OF HIGHWAY

## Premier Hearst Says Impos- sible to Quote Figures

## SECOND READING GIVEN

**Only Urgent Public Works to be Pro-  
ceeded With During War — Mr.  
Rowell Presses for More Details of  
Government's Plan.**

An estimate of some kind of what the proposed Provincial highway scheme would cost was asked by Mr. Rowell in the Legislature yesterday, when the second reading of the bill on the subject came up for consideration. The Liberal leader considered it inconceivable that the Government should embark on a project involving the expenditure of several million dollars without having some idea of the probable cost of the undertaking. The information sought for was not supplied, Premier Hearst stating he was advised by engineers that, having regard to the uncertainty of the future cost of labor, and so forth, it would be impossible for any engineer to give even an approximate estimate at the present time of what the road would cost.

### Feel Labor Scarcity.

Hon. Mr. Macdiarmid, in moving the second reading, stated it was not the intention of the Government to make any large expenditure on roads during the present year, as there was a scarcity of labor, and it would be almost a crime for the Government to enter the labor market in competition with manufacturers of munitions. Construction work would proceed after the war, and in that way the Government hope to give employment to a large number of soldiers. In the meantime the highway from Windsor to Montreal could be assumed, and provision made for its maintenance.

### Revenue From Motor Licenses.

The Minister said that in 1916 the sum of \$614,000 had been collected from automobile taxes, and this year they expected the amount would be \$750,000. Five years from now the probable revenue from that source would be \$1,250,000. The Government had set aside \$3,000,000 for the roads system.

### Give Farmers a Chance.

Mr. Sam Clarke (West Northumberland) said he would rather see the Government build roads that would serve the farmers and lead to the market towns of the Province than a road that would be a pleasure road for motorists. Radial railways were more desirable, in his opinion, than a speedway for automobiles. With regard to assessment, he thought it would be unfair to ask as much money from municipalities that were only touched by the road on the fringe as from municipalities where the road passed through the centre of the municipality. The proposed road would be a luxury so far as the municipalities he represented were concerned.

Mr. Rowell pressed the Government for their estimate of the probable cost of the road. "It is inconceivable," said he, "that the Government should embark on a project involving the expenditure of several million dollars without having some idea of the probable cost of the undertaking. I do not ask for details, but I do think we are entitled to an estimate of some kind. Have the Government an esti-