

GOV'T PROMISES MAJOR PROJECTS

New bridge step closer

by AL IRWIN
Citizen Staff Reporter

A Foothills Boulevard bridge across the Nechako River is in the design stage and should be ready to go to tender within a year, says Highways Minister Alex Fraser.

The bridge was one of several commitments Fraser made at a Friday meeting with Prince George city council.

He also said the government is ready to spend \$3 million on an interchange at Fifth Avenue and The Bypass, but not until city planners and engineers could show this would not cause more traffic congestion than it relieved.

Fraser also announced the provincial government now favors a new, \$20 million, four-lane Fraser River Bridge, rather than upgrading of traffic approaches to the old Canadian National Railway bridge at First Avenue.

And after Labor Minister Jack Heinrich, MLA for Prince George North, confirmed the city would be getting a cheque for \$2 million to defray 1975 amalgamation costs, Fraser surprised aldermen by saying he will ask for a further \$2 million.

Fraser said he expects the Foothills crossing to be completed within two years of the contract award.

Mayor Elmer Mercier said following the one-hour meeting he interpreted Fraser's statements as a "fairly firm commitment" to a Fifth Avenue-Bypass interchange.

Mercier said ministry concerns are almost the same as problems the city engineering department had already anticipated.

"Ernie (city engineer Ernie Obst) has recognized these problems all along, and was just waiting to learn what type of interchange they (the ministry) would propose," Mercier said.

Deputy Highways minister Tom Johnson told council the ministry had no doubt an underpass at Fifth Avenue would improve the traffic capacity of the Bypass.

But increased traffic on Fifth could cause congestion at the Lyon Street entrance to Sprucecland Shopping Centre, and at Ospika Boulevard and Carney Street intersections with Fifth, he said.

Johnson said land acquisition at the four corners of the intersection, for access roads to Fifth from the Bypass, could be very costly.

Mercier said a planning and engineering departments' study suggested by Fraser would begin immediately, and the city could iron out the problems, probably within two months.

Fraser told council construction of grade separations on the old CN bridge, an amalgamation promise made the city in 1975, would be "throwing good money after bad."

"We should be looking at anything but that," said Fraser.

Costs of the grades separations over or past the track would be between \$6 and \$8 million.

Johnson said while the grade separation was an amalgamation promise, the citizens of Prince George would be better off to put up with the inconvenience of trains blocking bridge access for a couple of years longer if they ended up with a totally new four-lane structure.

He said the ministry would consider nothing less than a four-lane structure for any area with a traffic volume exceeding 10,000 vehicles per day. The old CN bridge is approaching that volume now. Latest counts by the ministry indicate 8,000 vehicles use the bridge daily.

Besides the grade separation cost for the old bridge, these considerations made a new structure attractive, Johnson said.

The Citizen

Terry Roberts
City Editor
562-2111

Local news

- The limited life expectancy of the old CN bridge;
- High maintenance costs to keep the car decks in repair;
- Because each side of the bridge only has a single lane, a breakdown of one vehicle on the bridge causes long tie-ups.

Fraser said highways suggests a new bridge at the foot of Airport Hill, south of the old railway bridge, with traffic from the Pineview side of the river entering the city along First and Second Avenues.

Fraser said the ministry was prepared to pay the costs, if the buoyant economy of the province continues, and if the city can solve the problems of land

acquisition, and traffic flow. Mercier said after the meeting that the city agreed with the concept of a new bridge, but the location proposed by highways, while it appears good, should be the subject of council discussion and engineering studies.

He said he hopes the city can reach a decision on the location of the new bridge by fall.

Johnson told council the ministry would look into ways to solve rush hour tie-ups on Highway 97 at the New Fraser River Bridge and B.C.R. and Danson Industrial sites.

Fraser made no commitment to improving the bridge, as requested by Mercier, but Johnson said better access lanes to the industrial parks could be a solution to traffic problems there.

The \$2 million amalgamation grant announced by Heinrich will be in the mail next week, Heinrich said. The city can use those funds for whatever it wants.

Mercier has indicated the money will not be used to reduce the proposed one-mill tax rate increase in the 1980 provisional budget. He wants the money used for major construction projects.

Fraser said the further \$2 million he is asking for should be approved by the treasury board within two months.

That \$2 million would be paid by Highways for:

- Maintenance of rural roads;
- Correction of storm drainage problems;
- Pulp Mill Road improvements;
- Cash payment for additional collector road paving.

PLAZA 400 WORKERS

Safer crossing sought

Plaza 400 occupants want safer passage across Queensway Avenue.

A petition asking for pedestrian crosswalk lights on Queensway Avenue is being circulated in the new government building and will be presented to city council today.

David Stevenson, safety committee member in the environment ministry offices in the building, said 288 of the 400 people who occupy the government offices have signed the petition. It calls for pedestrian crossing lights at Fourth

and Fifth Avenue on Queensway.

"As the situation exists now," he said, "it is safer to jaywalk in the middle of the block than to cross at the intersections."

Most of the government parking is across Queensway from the building and people who drive government vehicles may have to cross the intersections several times a day.

Much of the parking for private vehicles is also across Queensway.

Stevenson said because Fourth Avenue's one-way traffic ends at Queensway, the traffic flow splits left and right. A driver coming down Fourth Avenue can turn right on a green light on Queensway without realizing there are people in the crosswalk.

A different problem exists at Fifth Avenue, he said. Traffic coming down the bend in Queensway toward the government building cannot always see if there are people in the intersection crosswalk.

"So far no people have been hit, but I saw an accident where one car hit another when the first braked hard to avoid a pedestrian," he said. Stevenson said one approach

to city hall did not work, so the occupants of the building are trying the petition method.

He said he was told the petition is on today's council agenda.

Big boom in mining?

VANCOUVER (CP) — British Columbia is on the verge of a major boom in mineral resource development, Energy Minister Bob McClelland said Friday.

McClelland told a group of resource company executives that exploration in B.C. already is as heavy as it was during the boom of the late 1960s.

He said exploration activity now is more broadly-based and widely-distributed than it has been in the past.

Forthcoming projects will include a lead and zinc smelter, the minister said.

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STRIKE VOTE
to be held February 26, 1980
6:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
in Room 101
at Prince George Regional Hospital
Casual employees having worked in the last 28 days, and all R.N.'s and graduates are eligible to vote. Advance voting may be done by contacting Sheila in P.A.R. Rides to poll available — contact Karen Simmons in Emergency. For more information call Jean McMartin at 564-8500, Lillian Schlensinger at 963-7626 or Do-reen McFarland at 563-7497.

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Citizen Photo by Dave Milne

Kub Kars

These racing "drivers" and members of the Prince George Wolf Cubs, start their homemade car models off at a Kub Kar rally held Saturday at Parkwood Mall. From left, Corey Darling, Kerry Dyck, Trevor Ellery and Jason Turner.

'HARD WORKERS WILL MAKE IT'

It's been touch-and-go in forest industry here

by ARNOLD OLSON
Citizen Staff Reporter

Breakup, which could happen any time now, will be the real key to how people working in the woods have survived the winter.

Spokesmen from both company and contracting ends of the industry say that earlier predictions of dire happenings because of high stumpage rates did not materialize. Adjustments were made by those affected.

Since late summer and early fall, the forest industry has suffered:

- Climbing interest rates;
- A drop in lumber prices

because housing starts were reduced;

● A call for lower stumpage rates was denied by Forest Minister Tom Waterland;

● The winter was, for some periods, too mild for logging operations;

● B.C. Rail workers went on strike and forest products could not be shipped.

"The total effect is still working its way through," said Van Scoffield, manager of Northern Interior Lumber Sector of B.C. Council of Forest Industries.

He said mills operated with lower long inventories than usual, holding off as long as possible before bringing in new wood.

In the last several weeks, he said, there has been a scramble to get wood from the forest to the mills; ads for equipment and operators have been placed and the scramble is on.

He said the tight market for contractors may be working in their favor, with higher prices being asked, but no reports have come in yet.

With transportation of wood to the mills delayed, the conditions and length of breakup might be the key to success or failure, he said.

Aiding the industry was that lumber prices have been creeping upward.

Scoffield's estimate of conditions were echoed by John Nelder, manager of B.C. Independent Logging Association.

He said, "by and large, when it appeared the mills weren't going to get any stumpage relief... they took the attitude, 'We'll have to get down to (working) anyway.'"

Mills which threatened to close operations saw other mills continuing operations and followed suit.

Shutdowns that were ordered, for the most part, were brief.

Now, he said, mills were taking all the wood they could get.

"Our members seem to be so busy they can't find time to attend a meeting," he said.

Aiding the members was the winter, which was mild enough not to freeze equipment, yet cold enough so roads stayed in good condition.

It differed greatly from last year, when the winter was so cold machines would not work, and when breakup came it was with a fast thaw that meant hauling was impossible. Only one or two cold snaps this winter affected operations — but briefly.

Alex Crabbe, manager of Canadian Association of Independent Machine Operators, said some of his group's members were facing tough times.

"We'll see a number of operators who will lose their machines this year," he said. But, he said, "the drivers and hard workers will make it."

The saw-off, as he sees it, is about 12 hours of work a day. Those who stop there have a marginal future.

The eight-hour-a-day man will go under.

The ones who put in 12 to 16 hours a day, seven days a week, while the work is around, will make it to another season.

"Only the fit survive." After the slight slowdown during last weeks of December, "skidding and snow conditions have been great... possibly the best winter we've had in years."

But the shutdowns had their effects — money used for other purposes was dipped into. Even the hard workers are hoping for a perfect breakup — short and quick but not too dry.

"Then the guys will be in great shape."

Right now, he said, "there are a lot of grass widows around, and kids who don't see their fathers for three weeks at a time."

Many in the industry fear for long dry periods, Crabbe said.

The snow conditions — low snow packs to keep forests moist with runoff — indicate possibilities of an early fire season. This could wipe out the gains all the current hard work has won.

Light plane damaged

VANDERHOOF (Staff) — A single-engine aircraft sustained heavy damage when it landed short of the runway at the Vanderhoof airport Sunday and flipped over.

RCMP said pilot John Gold of Dog Creek received minor injuries.

The plane, a Cessna 172, was owned by Vanderhoof Flying Service.

Police said Gold was approaching the runway from the west when he set down short of the pavement, touched down in soft snow and flipped.

Missing pay sparks walkout

Missing paycheques led to a picketline at the Prince George Husky Oil refinery Sunday morning.

A company spokesman said the cheques for the employees failed to arrive as usual on Friday and management hoped they would get to Prince George by plane Saturday.

However, they didn't arrive Saturday and when there were no cheques by Sunday morning, day shift workers refused to go to their jobs.

"Someone in Calgary made an error by shipping the cheques by bus and not by plane," the spokesman said.

The pay finally arrived Sunday by bus and the dispute was over.

The spokesman said this was the second time the pay for the employees arrived late.

Mae Flynn funeral set

Funeral service will be held Wednesday at 3 p.m. from Assman's Funeral Chapel for pioneer South Fort George resident Mrs. Walter (Mae) Flynn, who died Saturday following a lengthy illness.

Born Dec. 12, 1895 in Moncton, N.B., Mrs. Flynn, who studied nursing in New York City, came to South Fort George in 1921 to take a job as nurse in Prince George's first hospital. In 1926 she married grocer Walter Flynn, who predeceased her in 1957.

She is survived by four sons, Gerald, Ralph, Donald and William, all of Prince George and by one sister, Victoria Murray of Vancouver.

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF FRASER-FORT GEORGE TABOR LAKE NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the Provision of the Municipal Act a Public Hearing will be held on
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1980
7:30 p.m.

SONS OF NORWAY LODGE

In respect of By-Law 418, being a by-law to amend C.P.A. No. 7, Zoning and Subdivision By-law to create a new zone "Residential VII" and to rezone the following property from "Rural" to "Residential VII": Part of the SW 1/4 of DL 2184, Cariboo District, except Plan 13785.

The proposal is to create approximately 34 residential lots 1/2 acre in size. There are 11 existing dwellings on the property and this application will legalize the existing houses and create an additional 23 lots. The location is on Tabor Lake and the applicant is the Sons of Norway Lodge.

At the hearing all those who deem their interest in the land to be affected by this by-law shall be afforded an opportunity to be heard. Copies of the proposed by-law may be inspected at the Regional District Office, No. 311-1717 Third Avenue, Prince George, B.C., from 8:45 a.m. to 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday.
Y. D. Harris
Director of Regional Planning
Prince George,
February 19th, 1980



Citizen Photo by Dave Milne

'Brothers'

Some "little brothers" from the Big Brothers-Big Sisters of Prince George are shown snowmobile safety and a bit of fun during the weekend by members of the city's Snowmobile Club on the Buckhorn Road. Eleven boys from the organization participated in the event Sunday.