

Supply—Transport

construction of this bridge. The delay is simply one more disappointment as far as we are concerned, especially when a definite undertaking was given by the minister and by the government before and during the last election that the bridge would be constructed. The results up to now are practically nil.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): The engineering difficulties are greater after an election.

Mr. Black (Cumberland): That appears to be it. The people of Cape Breton and Nova Scotia are not satisfied with the progress that has been made. I do not want to be too critical of the minister, but I do not think there is justification for the delay in the construction of the Canso bridge in view of the definite undertaking by the minister and the government.

Mr. Chevrier: The hon. member says that he agrees with the hon. member for Cape Breton South, but he is disagreeing with him now.

Mr. Black (Cumberland): If I am disagreeing with the hon. member, the people of Nova Scotia are agreeing with me. I do not think there is much more that I can say. The minister states, for the first time to my knowledge, that the engineers are again in consultation and I suppose they will bring in a further report before long.

Mr. Chevrier: I have made that statement three times already.

Mr. Black (Cumberland): The minister has made it again tonight. All we can do is wait to see what their report is going to be and what steps will be taken to have the Canso bridge built. With the entry of Newfoundland into confederation and the importance of the steel and coal industries to our defence efforts it is more important than ever that the Canso bridge be built without further delay. Speaking for the people of Nova Scotia I can say that there is grave disappointment that more headway has not been made in the construction of the Canso bridge in view of the definite undertaking given more than two years ago to the people of Nova Scotia and all Canada by the minister and the government. We shall just have to wait and see what is to be done.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): I should like to make a few comments on this matter. I feel, like the hon. member for Cumberland, that we have rather unexpectedly been pressed into the consideration of a document which I consider to be of great importance. I hope the minister is listening to me because I am going to ask him to consider whether it

[Mr. Black (Cumberland).]

might not be a good thing to allow this to stand while he and I and many other people here go to pay our respects to the president of the French republic.

I hope the minister will forgive me for saying that I am reminded of a remark made in the British house of commons by the Right Hon. Anthony Eden to a minister who had dealt with a certain subject. He said that the minister had taken an amiable gallop through the material. I think that is just what the Minister of Transport has done tonight because after all this report is packed full with a great deal of important material.

I think we will all agree with what has been said about the tremendous importance of transportation in the days that we are now facing. The other night we heard an interesting description of the development of the Northwest Territories to the point where a new form of government is being set up. Up to the present the development in this country has been a kind of ribbon development, but I believe we are on the verge of great expansion. If the urgency of the defence preparations continues, I suppose our north country may develop in a way we can hardly imagine.

I realize that we cannot ask the minister to get up and announce government policy in connection with the twelve or fifteen things that are in this report. Perhaps it might be argued that there is no point in spending many hours in debating this report. But the fact is that the report contains many things on which we need education and on which the public needs education. One which seems to me to bristle with difficulties and to be of great importance is the relationship between road and rail transport which is dealt with in the report.

There is another thing that I put to the minister as a matter which perhaps it would be reasonable to ask a statement on, and this was referred to by the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra. At the top of page 131 of the report reference is made to possible railway development, and I quote from the report:

It seems to be generally assumed that most, if not all, railway expansion in the foreseeable future will be carried on by the government of Canada or by the Canadian National Railways which the government owns.

Then it speaks about the ill-conceived and therefore excessive construction. None of us will deny that there have been ill-conceived and excessive railway developments in the past. We can look back to the first ten years of the century as being a most extravagant time, yet if you go further back and consider the earlier railroads, I suggest to the minister that things might have been different when