

rate engineering surveys. I also understand that, following another visit to Ottawa, Mr. MacMillan quoted the Minister of Munitions and Supply, perhaps in his capacity as Minister of Reconstruction, to the effect that this causeway would be built. In any event such an announcement was made to the people of Nova Scotia, and it has been confirmed by Hon. A. L. Macdonald, the present premier and his candidates.

I believe this is a proper occasion to ask for a statement from the hon. member who has this resolution in charge, or from the Minister of Transport or the Minister of Reconstruction. This is an important matter to Nova Scotia, especially eastern Nova Scotia, and at this time, when we are dealing with what I presume is the only resolution to provide funds for capital expenditures of the Canadian National Railways, I believe there should be a declaration of policy.

Mr. GILLIS: I should like to join in the remarks just made by the hon. member for Cumberland. I did not intend to say anything on this matter until the bill was in committee, but since the hon. member has raised it now I wish to make a few observations. My only objection to the resolution is that the government are not asking for enough money, if they require \$8,800,000 for their ordinary requirements. As I recall the details of the matter raised by the hon. member for Cumberland, the estimate of the Canadian National Railways in connection with their end of the work, double-tracking the main line from Sydney to Moncton and making a number of necessary changes, was for something around \$6,500,000, according to a statement made by Mr. Fairweather when he appeared before the reconstruction committee. So that I should like to see the government increase the amount asked for in this resolution.

The reason I believe some statement should come from the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Reconstruction in this connection is that the matter of building the causeway across the strait of Canso, double-tracking the main line, improving the yards and so forth, has been given a great deal of consideration by members of this house. I remember attending meetings of the reconstruction committee for weeks, probing the possibilities of jobs in the post-war period. In connection with this particular project we heard the chief engineer of the Department of Public Works, and we heard from Mr. Fairweather, chief economic adviser of the Canadian National Railways. After a great deal of consideration, that committee prepared a report which was tabled in the house and accepted. On two

[Mr. Black (Cumberland).]

occasions the Minister of Munitions and Supply stated in this house that this was to be one of Nova Scotia's main post-war projects.

Mr. MacNICOL: And so it should be.

Mr. GILLIS: To appreciate how far-sighted that committee was in its estimate of the employment situation in that part of the country one need only look at the employment figures in Nova Scotia to-day. Then he will see that unless this project is gone ahead with there is practically nothing else to provide employment in that province. Every war industry that functioned there has been closed out. No new industries have been created, and from one end to the other that province is a straight unemployment camp. The sad thing about a matter of this kind is the loss of prestige on the part of public men generally. This government was definitely committed to that undertaking as a major post-war project; the Minister of Munitions and Supply stated they were definitely going ahead with it. The then premier of Nova Scotia also definitely went on record that this was one of the main considerations in the post-war period. The present premier of Nova Scotia, who was then minister for naval services, also was definitely committed to it. It is rather sad now to read the editorial comments in the newspapers in connection with matters of this kind. In the *Ottawa Citizen* of November 24 I found an editorial clipped from the *Sydney Post-Record*, which stated that Hon. Angus L. Macdonald was committed to this project: the present premier of Nova Scotia was committed to it; I was committed to it; the Minister of Reconstruction was committed to it, and then they wound up by saying that it looked as though it was only a balloon which was flown for political purposes. I hope that is not the case; but to-day, after the election is over, the Minister of Munitions and Supply begins to talk about the difficulties of getting these things done.

The resolution now before the house definitely links the Canadian National with this project because, according to their own estimate, if it is proceeded with they will spend \$6,500,000 to carry out their part of the programme which was recommended in the report of the reconstruction and reestablishment committee, which report was tabled in this house without opposition. This leads me to believe that hon. members were unanimously in favour of it. Therefore I believe that the Minister of Finance should be prepared to come here and make a statement one way or the other, and say whether the Canadian