

tolls without further negotiation. I am sure that they feel it should be done, but it should be done by way of agreement. I can tell both hon. gentlemen here and now that, in so far as the national harbours board is concerned, it is willing at any time to enter into negotiations with the city of Montreal and the province of Quebec with a view to abolishing tolls and to reaching a settlement which would take into consideration the amount of money that has been spent by the national harbours board and by the other bodies, so that tolls would not be abolished at the sole expense of the federal government. I do not think the hon. gentleman, or anybody else in the committee, would for one moment consider that the tolls on this bridge should be abolished at the expense of the federal government. I certainly would not stand for it and both hon. gentlemen would not.

Mr. PINARD: That is what I had in mind. But I am beginning to lose confidence in the possibilities of negotiations with the present government of Quebec.

Mr. CHEVRIER: Be that as it may, I have to say this, that there seems to be no objection, in so far as the national harbours board is concerned, to entering into negotiations, but the initiative will have to come from some source. The delegation which interviewed me some time ago asked me what the government was prepared to do. I simply stated what the position was. I reiterate that statement here this evening, namely, that we are prepared at all times to enter into negotiations toward the abolition of tolls but on a proportionate and fair basis. We will sell to the province or to the municipality the Jacques Cartier bridge, but they will have to take into consideration a fair and reasonable value. I do not want to go into this thing at great length.

Let me say just one word with reference to the position of the Canadian National Railways and the Victoria bridge. It is not a new question. The hon. gentleman says that it has been brought up here as long as forty years ago when it was asked that tolls be abolished, and nothing was done. Well, nothing was done because again the request is that tolls be abolished at the exclusive and sole expense of the federal government, and the federal government has always taken the position through its agency, the Canadian National Railways, that that should not be the case. As far back as 1942 the deputy minister of transport was advised by the Canadian National

Railways that it would be willing to agree to a proposal for abolishing tolls, subject to the following;

The Canadian National is agreeable to abolishing tolls on private passenger cars and passengers carried therein, passing over the Victoria bridge, provided a satisfactory agreement could be effected with the province, which will compensate the Canadian National for the loss incurred and protect its interests.

The hon. gentleman has asked for a number of things that I am sure he will not want me to give him on these estimates. For instance, he asks for a list of the accidents on the bridge and a list of revenues from the Victoria bridge. That is information which can be obtained in the railways and shipping committee of the House of Commons when the officers of the Canadian National Railways are there and prepared to answer questions.

Mr. PINARD: I am ready to accept the suggestion, but I should like very much to get the list of revenues collected on the Victoria bridge if at all possible.

Mr. CHEVRIER: I am sorry; I cannot give that information to the hon. gentleman. I will undertake to get it for him at the earliest possible day.

Mr. McGARRY: Mr. Chairman, I am assuming that general discussion is permitted on this item. I wish to bring to the attention of the committee a matter which is of great concern to the maritime provinces directly and to the whole dominion indirectly. I am referring to the spanning of the strait of Canso by a bridge or a causeway. This is a matter which has concerned the people of the maritimes particularly for a great many years. They have urged the government to take this project into favourable consideration. It is one of great importance. I might say that it is an urgent thing; particularly is it necessary if the transportation facilities of the maritime provinces are to be relieved of their inadequacies and their operating awkwardnesses.

I possibly could not contribute to this committee a more intelligent understanding of the need of this project and the necessity of having it attended to as early as possible than if I were to submit a report which was compiled by an ex-premier of Nova Scotia, Mr. A. S. MacMillan. This report was compiled after a great deal of careful and intensive study by Mr. MacMillan in collaboration with engineer experts. With the unanimous permission of the committee I should like to read the report and have it placed on *Hansard*. Before reading the report, may I say that Mr. MacMillan is a man who, since his very