

Newfoundland

strait in either direction lose between five and twelve hours, an average of a full working day. On the basis of 1943 traffic the delay here for freight crossings alone represents a loss in unnecessary wages of \$202,000 a year.

If we are to hope for any reasonable expansion and development of trade between Canada and the new province of Newfoundland something must be done to improve the conditions described in the quotations from the Dawson report which I have just read. The fact is that the line between Truro and Sydney, including the crossing of the strait of Canso, has a capacity which is fully taken up at present by the business using that line of railway and the crossing of the strait. What the railway will do with any further traffic is more or less of a mystery. The Minister of Transport knows how the members from Nova Scotia have urged him to consider improving the system, and particularly improving the crossing over the strait of Canso. The entry of Newfoundland into Canada, with the additional burden which will be placed upon the transportation system, although a burden we hope for and which is one of our objects, is only another reason added on top of the very valid arguments and reasons which have existed for years for properly considering improvement of the crossing of the strait of Canso.

In section 32 there is also mentioned a proposal to complete the motor road in Newfoundland which in a few years' time should make possible reasonable highway travel in the new province. The provision of a proper crossing for the strait of Canso is important from that point of view as well. No one will feel that the prospective traffic will be properly served unless a suitable crossing is provided. The province of Nova Scotia has co-operated with the dominion government in what we understand was a thorough engineering survey of the crossing of the strait of Canso, the report on which we are anxiously awaiting from the minister. I think that indicates that the province of Nova Scotia is prepared to do its share in providing for a part of the expense of a highway crossing of the strait. I hope the dominion government is prepared to do its part with respect to the provision of a reasonable and proper crossing from a railway point of view. I want to emphasize to the committee that the entry of Newfoundland is only one further but very important consideration which must be kept in mind.

Mr. Gillis: Mr. Chairman, I have no intention of quoting the Dawson report, the Disney report, or the report of the reconstruction committee. That is merely a historical survey, and you have heard it so often in the house that I would be ashamed to repeat it. The report in which we are now interested is that of the engineering commission which has

been dealing with the matter for some considerable time. I concur in everything the junior member for Halifax has just said, but there is one point I should like to stress. I hope that before this section carries the Minister of Transport will be able to stand up in his place and tell us that he is ready to table the report of the engineering commission tomorrow or the next day.

Mr. Chevrier: *Nemo dat quod non habet.*

Mr. Gillis: Bringing Newfoundland into confederation is merely an additional argument for the improvement of transportation facilities on the railway line east of Moncton. Transportation difficulties in that region are referred to in the press from day to day. I noticed that the old ferry that crosses the strait is tied up because there is ice there, and they have to shift her to new moorings, and all that kind of thing. I have seen that in the press every day for the last week. The point I should like to drive home to the government is that practically everyone who has ever discussed the improvement of transportation facilities in eastern Canada is agreed that it should be done. There is no difference of opinion. The reconstruction committee said it should be done; in the Dawson report—and these are all government agencies—it was stressed very strongly. The Disney report, the report of a railway engineer, said it could be done, that it was within reason as far as cost is concerned, and that there was no engineering problem. No one has disagreed with the necessity for it.

Bringing Newfoundland within confederation is going to mean a tremendous increase in traffic on that end of the line. My information is that seventy-five per cent of the imports of Newfoundland previous to this agreement came from the United States by water. When Newfoundland finally hooks up with us and these agreements are ratified I believe those imports which were being brought in from the United States will come from Canada, which means they will have to be shipped down from Ontario and Quebec, dragged over that old, twisted, crooked one-track line, held up at the strait of Canso and then transferred to that inadequate ferry service now operating between North Sydney and Newfoundland. I think there must be an improvement right along the line. If we are to properly service that tenth province I think the government should get a report from the engineering commission as soon as possible and begin the necessary improvements down there. Unless that is done, because of the inadequacy of the transportation facilities, Newfoundland will have to continue to bring in her imports by water from the United States. We have long delays at that end of the line now, with our ordinary