

*Relocation of Railway Lines*

● (1620)

A necessary condition for approval of the proposal is that the railway involved with neither gain nor lose from railway relocation and rerouting. There are sections in the bill and an appendix which set out the admittedly rather complicated formula which is designed to ensure that the railways neither win nor lose by a proposal.

The order that the commission makes relative to railway facilities could contain provisions for discontinuation of railway operations over any line within the railway transportation study or for relocation of railway lines, facilities, removal of tracks, buildings, bridges or other structures in the area and use of rail lines belonging to one company by equipment of another company. For example, proposals for a city where there were two or three different transportation centres and railway stations could recommend that they be combined into one "union station" where obviously the facilities of one railroad would be used by another. The use of rail lines belonging to one company by equipment of another, and the use of rail lines or rights-of-way by a public transit system—which is now a proposal in many major cities—will provide to them at the least possible cost, the right-of-way for the public transit facilities that many are now studying. If you go out to build a rapid transit system and have to acquire rights-of-way through urban areas by buying buildings and land, it will be too expensive. But if, under these provisions, you can use the existing rights of way for rapid transit that have heretofore been used for street and rail traffic, there will be an immense saving to municipalities and public transportation commissions.

When the commission goes through this whole process which recommends federal assistance for implementation of relocation/ rerouting proposals, the Minister of Transport may authorize payment of a relocation grant toward the cost of implementing the project. Such a grant can be up to 50 per cent of the net cost of relocation and rerouting proposals. It is clear that we can make a contribution to the development of the plans of up to 50 per cent, and toward the actual implementation of this plan of 50 per cent of the net cost. I underline net cost, because obviously if you take railway facilities and move them from one piece of land to another area, there are costs and savings to the railway involved. The land that is set free is of immense value and is put on one side of the ledger, while the costs are put on the other. Any grant is 50 per cent of that net cost.

Financial assistance may be provided for grade separations for new railway lines and new safety devices on existing railway lines, if required, because of railway relocation/ rerouting from one part of a city or around a city.

A needed underpass or overpass would be provided under Parts II and III of the act. Federal expenditures under this legislation are expected to be in the order of \$250 million over the next five years for railroad relocation. Specific allocation for each year will be provided by a separate vote in the estimates of the Ministry of Transport.

Thus far, Mr. Speaker, I have concentrated my remarks almost entirely on part I, relating to railway relocations and reroutings provisions. I think these have tremendous

[Mr. Basford.]

urban implications for cities across Canada. In the time that I have been minister, nothing that I have said or introduced has generated so much interest from municipal councils across Canada as these relocation proposals. I know that this is recognized in this House and that the opposition parties will agree to deal with this legislation quickly because they, too, know the great interest that municipalities have in the urban implications of the relocation proposals.

I want to turn briefly to parts II and III of the bill, Mr. Speaker, which are clearly transportation matters and under the jurisdiction of my colleague. They will be dealt with in more detail by the parliamentary secretary or by my colleague later in this debate.

Obviously of equal importance when dealing with railroads is the matter of public safety, which is embodied in parts II and III of the bill. These are concerned with special grants for grade separations, underpasses, overpasses, tunnels, bridges and railway grade crossings.

The provisions relating to grade crossings and grade separations follow recommendations made by the railway transport committee and the Canadian Transport Commission to increase the limits of federal assistance for railway grade separation projects. Also important are the recommendations that have been made by the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities as to the level of contribution under the grade crossing fund.

Such expansion as is provided in the legislation is intended to bring grant provisions into line with the increased costs of construction of overpasses and subways. The cost of providing safe railway crossings and grade separations has climbed over the years. Such installations, especially in large centres, have become extremely costly and the act provides increased federal assistance either to provisions in the railway grade crossing fund or through new provisions for special grants for separations which are contained in part II.

The proposed new federal assistance covers level crossing protection work—signs, signals and that type of thing. Federal assistance covers level crossing protection work, reconstruction of or improvement to existing grade separations and construction of new grade separations. The proposed new levels of federal assistance are for level crossing protection work for which 80 per cent of the costs may be paid from the grade crossing fund up to a new limit of \$1 million which is double the existing limit; for reconstruction of or improvement to existing grade separations, 50 per cent of the cost, from the grade crossing fund, up to a new ceiling of \$625,000; the existing limit is \$250,000.

In the legislation there are quite complicated formulas for the payment of portions of the cost of any reconstruction projects to \$1,250,000. The parliamentary secretary will deal with this in more detail this evening. That is the financial formula for grade separations and grade crossings which is contained in parts II and III of the act, Mr. Speaker.

The commission may, apart from the formulae, recommend a special grant if it is satisfied that a grade separation is required for the protection, safety and convenience of the public, and that the new road or highway will divert