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THE LEVEL CROSSING.

The Dominion Parliament at its last session amended the Railway Act by adding Section 239 A, which read as follows:—

The sum of two hundred thousand dollars each year for five consecutive years from the first day of April, one thousand nine hundred and nine, shall be appropriated and set apart from the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the purpose of aiding in the providing by actual construction work of protection, safety and convenience for the public in respect of highway crossings of the railway at rail level in existence on the said first day of April.

The Act further provides that the money so spent shall be for actual construction, and shall not include maintenance or operation charges.

Subsection 3 of Section 239 A reads:—

The total amount of money to be apportioned, and directed and ordered by the Board to be payable from any such annual appropriation shall not, in the case of any one crossing, exceed twenty per cent. of the cost of the actual construction work in providing such protection, safety and convenience, and shall not, in any such case, exceed the sum of five thousand dollars, and no such money shall in any one year be applied to more than three crossings in any one municipality or more than once to any one crossing.

To assist in designating the level crossings that are dangerous the Board are asking for reports from the railways as to the level crossings they consider especially dangerous.

It will be interesting to notice the haste with which such a list will be submitted by the railways. Such a list would likely entail the expenditure of half a million annually for five years by Canadian railways, and this expenditure will be made without hope of financial returns.

Some better system of selection must be tried. 'Tis true a list of crossings that have been the scene of one or more killings would be of interest, but there are many crossings that are "dangerous," and that could easily be removed which have not as yet been the scene of a fatal accident.

The object of this legislation, we take it, was to remove or protect level crossings at points where such protection was of public interest. A few of the most appalling level crossing accidents were at lonely crossroads where the traffic was, and is, very light. To protect these and leave others unprotected would be a mistake.

The municipalities are as much interested as the railways, and they should at once prepare plans, gather statistics, and submit suggestions to the Board, that the interests of the users of the highways may be just as carefully considered as the comfort and safety of railway travellers.

In this connection it is interesting to note that the Railway Commission have ordered gates at Raglan Street crossing at Renfrew, Ont. Twenty per cent. of the cost of erecting the gates will be paid out of the