

made a survey of the number of separations that are going to be required in the future, and the importance of such?

Mr. SHEPARD: I think the only answer I can give to that—and it is not too direct an answer—is, that in 1954 the Board of Transport Commissioners was directed by Order in Council to conduct a study on the over-all problem of railway-highway crossings. That is available in printed form.

I think it has to be planned basically on a local basis. Each provincial highway authority—take the province of Ontario, as an example—certainly is looking ahead. The construction of this new highway between Toronto and Montreal is an example of it, where they are providing for grade separations although at the moment the highway is not even in use and perhaps will not be completed for another two or three years.

Our board, through our engineering staff, have been keeping a close liaison with all the provincial highway authorities. To that extent there is a concentration on the over-all problem, but it is of necessity geographically divided up.

Mr. DRYSDALE: Mr. Chairman, I was wondering what is the average length of time for a grade crossing application to be processed. Is it from the time of application by the municipality or the railway to the time the crossing is actually approved?

Mr. SHEPARD: I am told by our director of engineering that it takes as much as a year, which I presume means it takes less than a year on some occasions. But I think it should be made clear that a good deal of work has to be done. Before the application is filed with our board, all the engineering work has to be done.

Mr. DRYSDALE: Would there be any way of speeding this up, because in a lot of cases it is a case where public safety is involved? Bluntly, why does it take a year?

Mr. SHEPARD: Well, I think it takes a year—it is not a year in our hands; it takes a year because of the nature of the beast. When you are talking of protection, of grade separation, you have to do initial planning, you have to do engineering tests, tests of the soil to see whether it is going to hold the structure and you have to go through all the preliminary engineering work. All this must go on before the application comes before our board and the railways must agree to the form of the plan itself.

Mr. DRYSDALE: Well, who does the preliminary work, the railway or the board?

Mr. SHEPARD: The applicant does all the preliminary work.

Mr. DRYSDALE: How long does it take from the time it reaches the board after the preliminary work has been done?

Mr. SHEPARD: Well, I think it is a much shorter time. I am advised by our director of engineering that it depends on who the application originates with. If it comes from a provincial highway authority they know exactly what our requirements are and it comes in a form that can be very quickly approved. Mr. Dumontier advises me, that there is less than a month from the time received until the order is issued for the work to proceed.

Mr. DRYSDALE: Well, what else has to be done when it reaches the board?

Mr. SHEPARD: What do we do?

Mr. DRYSDALE: After the preliminary work, all the soil testing and engineering work on the crossing has already been done, what takes the board a month?

Mr. SHEPARD: Well, the board has engineering responsibilities. Our engineering staff—we have a staff of about twelve engineers—must approve