

HOUSE OF COMMONS

November 25, 1963

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

THE LATE PRESIDENT KENNEDY

SILENT TRIBUTE TO THE LATE PRESIDENT
OF THE UNITED STATES

Hon. Lionel Chevrier (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we are about to resume the discharge of our responsibilities for the nation's business, which we suspended on Friday after receiving the shocking news of the death of the late president of the United States. Just two hours ago in Washington the nation that President Kennedy led so brilliantly, joined by the representatives of countries far and near, paid a last formal tribute to him. As a mark of our respect and sorrow I should like to suggest to the house that before we turn to the business of the day the members stand for one minute in silent tribute.

[Whereupon the house stood in silence for one minute.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

SUSPENSION OF ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS—
ADJOURNMENT AT 6 P.M.

Mr. Speaker: I understand that agreement has been reached by all members that we will dispense with routine proceedings and pass at once to legislation, and that at 5 p.m. we will suspend the hour for private members' business and adjourn at 6 p.m. Is it so ordered?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

RAILWAY ACT

AMENDMENT EXTENDING PAYMENTS FROM
GRADE CROSSING FUND

Hon. G. J. McIlraith (Minister of Transport) moved that the house go into committee to consider the following resolution:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to amend the Railway Act, chapter 40 of the statutes of 1958, as amended by chapter 35 of the statutes of 1960, to permit certain grants to be made from the railway grade crossing fund for a further period of three years beyond January 31, 1964.

Motion agreed to and the house went into committee, Mr. Batten in the chair.

Mr. McIlraith: The purpose of this legislation is to extend for a further period of

three years, from January 31, 1964, an expanded program of assistance through the railway grade crossing fund for the provision of reflective markings on the sides of railway cars, for the cost of protective work at level crossings, and for the building or reconstruction of grade separations.

In 1955, following an investigation into the matter of grade crossing protection assistance by the board of transport commissioners, section 265 of the Railway Act was amended by increasing the annual statutory grant to the grade crossing fund from \$1 million to \$5 million. At the same time the limits on the contribution to any single project were raised from 40 per cent of total cost or \$150,000 maximum to 60 per cent of total cost or \$300,000 maximum. Provision was also made for the first time to allow contributions from the fund for reconstruction and improvement of grade separations which had become obsolete in the course of time.

The result of this was a marked expansion in the program of crossing protection and removal throughout the country, and a backlog of worth while projects accumulated in excess of the resources available to the grade crossing fund. In 1958 section 265 was therefore again amended providing for a further expansion in the maximum limits of funds that could be applied to single projects. These became 80 per cent of cost to a maximum of \$500,000 for projects at level crossings, and 50 per cent or \$250,000 for the reconstruction of existing grade separations. Beginning that year a supplementary grant of \$10 million for the fund was voted in the estimates. This legislation provided a three year period for the expanded limits just described. In 1960 the period was extended by another amendment of the act.

This period will expire on January 31, 1964. The present bill will provide for the extension of the period for a further three years, until January 31, 1967. What is being sought today is authority to continue that extended limit for the further period of three years.

This legislation also deals with another matter which has nothing to do with expenditure. Recently in the supreme court of Alberta, trial division, a decision was handed down having to do with the speed of railway trains at crossings where protection had been ordered. The interpretation placed on the section of the relevant statute is somewhat