

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

administration is extremely difficult, because everyone is always asking for more money.

Another suggestion I would like to put forward is that I believe, Mr. Speaker, if we are to be guided by the reports of the Board of Transport Commissioners, they have absolutely no time to deal properly with requests connected with grade crossings.

For instance, I read in the 1965 report that the Board of Transport Commissioners has received 2,584 requests under various pieces of legislation they administer. They have issued 3,080 orders and two general orders.

It is obvious that the Board of Transport Commissioners is overworked and that applicants sometimes have to suffer from the delays in procedure and the slowness to make decisions. It is not intended to criticize the board, but to deplore a factual situation from which the board itself has to suffer. It is only through amendments to the legislation that we will be able to correct this situation.

As to the safety measures already suggested in the past, namely the installation of rotating lights on the engines or phosphorescent lines on every car, or still convex mirrors, a great many have been suggested in the past. I wonder how intensively they were studied by the Board of Transport Commissioners. Mr. Speaker, I believe that we realize regretfully at this time that the grade-crossing policy is not in accordance with the new modern requirements of very fast trains, that is turbo-trains, that will be put in operation.

Therefore, I urge the authorities to act accordingly, so as to provide the public with maximum security.

[*English*]

**Mr. J. A. Byrne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, first I should like to compliment the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Choquette) for the very forceful representations he made this evening and for the representations which he has made in the past. He has shown a very great concern in respect of this matter and I am sure this is not the last representation he will make to government.

As I am sure the hon. member will understand that, at the moment the question of grade separation is one for determination by the department of highways, or its counterpart, under provincial jurisdiction. It is for them to determine where and when a grade separation should be made. Then the federal government pays 80 per cent of the cost of the grade separation up to \$500,000. The hon. member has said that \$15 million in the fund is not sufficient. I have not heard, however, of any circumstance in which an application has been denied on the basis that there were insufficient funds. They have been denied by the board rather on the question of whether or not the facility so recommended is of sufficient importance to justify the cost.

Usually, of course, the railway company makes its recommendations based on the count at the crossing, and so on. No one of course can guarantee that an automobile accident will not take place; this is one of the hazards of the modern age. Just the other day in my riding a completely inexplicable accident took place on a straight stretch of road between two automobiles driven by responsible people. Seven persons were killed; no one survived. So, accidents do happen on the highways, certainly more frequently than at grade crossings. This is not a suggestion that we should not give this matter urgent consideration, particularly in respect of the high speed train program which is being developed.

There is no question but that high speed turbo trains must operate on a completely protected track. It is unthinkable that there would be a grade crossing where there might be a train travelling at speeds of 100 or 120 miles an hour. Even a bird could cause damage if it were to hit a train travelling at such a speed. A collision with a gasoline truck or a similar obstruction would simply mean that an entire train would be in flames in a moment. There is no question but that this policy must be reviewed and the government is giving it a great deal of consideration.

● (10:30 p.m.)

Motion agreed to and the house adjourned at 10.33 p.m.