

## MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

July 10, 1946.

The Standing Committee on Railways, Canals and Telegraph Lines met this day at 4.00 o'clock p.m. The Chairman Mr. Louis O. Breithaupt, presided.

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, if you will kindly come to order; we have more than a quorum, a very good attendance to-day. The procedure will be, with your consent, that the Minister of Transport will make a statement in connection with the proposed bill.

Hon. Mr. CHEVRIER: Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, the last time we met here there was some suggestion of getting more evidence about the number of level crossings that might be affected if the suggested amendment to 308 were passed, and about certain other installations, evidence which the committee thought would be available, or might be made available.

I communicated with the chairman of the Board of Transport Commissioners, and he told me that the desired information was not available in the hands of the Board of Transport Commissioners, and that it would take some time to get it from the railways. He felt that it would be difficult to get it immediately.

Since the last hearing, I have given some thought to this bill. Of course I am in the hands of the committee, but I wish to say this: that I am of the same view now that I was when the bill was introduced in the House, so far as the position of the people in the Toronto area are concerned; but having looked at the bill, I feel that it might be a mistake to pass it as such. My reason for saying that is this: at the last hearing I suggested a limitation of 100,000, so far as population goes. Since then, members have come to me and suggested that that figure be cut to 50,000; and still again to 25,000. If that were ever done, then there would be little or no protection under section 308. In other words, we would be doing negatively what we ought to be doing positively.

What we are attempting to do here is to give assistance to a community that is unquestionably suffering; but by doing that we are going to open wide the door to other communities which should not have this power, the right to pass such a bill. So, I say, therefore, that having given it some consideration, I have come to that conclusion. The Board of Transport Commissioners are now considering a revision—that may not be the correct word—of the Railway Act. They have set up a committee to prepare amendments to the Railway Act. Those amendments will be numerous. I am prepared to ask the board, in its survey of the Railway Act, to consider an amendment of the Act which might meet the Toronto situation.

Perhaps that could be done in this way. It might be possible, under some section of the Act, to give the board authority to pass regulations, or a regulation, covering a situation in a particular community such as Toronto, Hamilton, Windsor, London, and the larger centres. I refer, of course, only to the province of Ontario; but it would apply to Montreal, Quebec and other large centres across Canada.

Mr. IRVINE: Are we still discussing the Whistling bill?

The CHAIRMAN: It is bill No. 3, yes. I am sorry, I thought that was understood.