

share the Canadian Pacific Railway Company should contribute and what share the various municipalities interested should contribute towards the construction of highway crossings. In view of the fact that our railway policy is not finally settled, it might be advisable to aid the construction of highway crossings for a year or two, but I fail to see how we can justify the laying down of a policy of this kind and providing that it shall be carried out for a period of ten years. The period of the proposed aid should be limited to two years at the very extreme.

Mr. SHEARD: Is this proposed legislation to have an obligatory and mandatory effect regarding all the crossings that were in existence prior to 1909? I hope it will have that effect, because the matter particularly concerns large centres, which suffer probably quite as much as any other part of the country in this respect. It is in the interests of the Dominion at large that these level crossings be done away with. If an appropriation will assist in bringing this about, it is certainly very desirable that the appropriation should be made. I should like to know clearly from the minister how generally this is going to be applied to low level crossings.

Mr. REID: When a complaint is made to the Board of Railway Commissioners, they can, if they so desire, order the change to be made. They have power to order that any crossing which they consider dangerous shall come under this measure and be removed.

The point raised by the hon. member opposite (Mr. Vien) as to doing away with this payment altogether is one that may be considered by this House. But the Act which was passed in 1909 was passed for this reason: There are crossings which are considered dangerous; in fact, I have in mind crossings at which people have been killed, and the Act of 1909 was passed for the purpose of assisting in removing all those dangerous crossings. The aid was given in the public interest to save life, and so as not to put the whole cost, which is sometimes very heavy, on municipalities which could not afford to pay the full amount for which they might be assessed. In the same way, it was felt that it would be a great hardship on the railways to make them pay their full share. Therefore, it was decided at that time that the Government should give aid to the extent of 20 per cent of the cost. The hon. member wishes us to do away with the payment of

this 20 per cent and to put the Board of Railway Commissioners in this position, that if a complaint is made that a crossing is dangerous, the board shall have the power to order that a subway or whatever else is necessary to remove the dangerous crossing shall be constructed, and that the cost shall be assessed on the railway and the municipality concerned. There are cases where such a course would be a great hardship on other railways than the Canadian Pacific, and it would be a great hardship on some municipalities to construct a very large subway. As the railways are operated in the public interest, it was considered desirable that a small amount should be paid to assist in removing dangerous crossings. The amount, \$200,000 a year, is not very large, and as the removal of dangerous crossings has saved many lives, I think the amount is worth the purpose for which it is appropriated.

As we now own one-half of the railways in Canada, this aid, in so far as the Canadian National railways are concerned, is only taking money out of one pocket and putting it into another. I feel that the Canadian National railways, being owned by the Dominion Government, should not be treated in a different manner from any other railway that has received a charter from the Government of Canada. The Canadian National railways should continue in the same position, so far as the Board of Railway Commissioners is concerned, as they did prior to the Government becoming the owner of them, and they should compete, just as though they were privately owned, with the other railways. Therefore, I feel that if this proposed appropriation is passed, it should be extended to the Canadian Pacific and the other railways just the same as before. It would be a bad thing if we were to cease rendering this assistance at the present time. We should continue rendering it in order to remove all these dangerous crossings as quickly as possible. If the members of this House feel that this proposed appropriation should be struck out, then we shall have to bring it up again in connection with the Railway Act which will be before the House and a subcommittee as soon as we can reach it.

Mr. COCKSHUTT: As this is a very small amount to cover all the crossings in Canada, and as there will be many applications for assistance, what percentage is to be devoted for doing the work on a certain crossing? Is it to be ten, twenty-five, fifty or one hundred per cent, and is this