

Canadian National Railways

have been suggested with regard to the disposition of this bill, but as far as I am concerned I am very happy to see this development taking place.

● (7:40 p.m.)

Mr. A. D. Alkenbrack (Prince Edward-Lennox): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to take very much time of the house, but I do want to draw the attention of both the government and the house to the need for public safety in connection with just such legislation as envisaged by Bill No. C-165. During our history as a confederation we have granted charters to various railway companies which, as hon. members know, have built railways from one end of Canada to the other, often resulting in great duplication. This year of all years the house has been discussing to a great extent railway abandonment, which ties in with railway building.

I should just like to say a few words about public safety and the need for railway crossing safety devices in the case of every new railway built. I have with me a communication which emanated from Picton, which is situated in Prince Edward county in my riding, pointing up the need for this cognizance of public safety on the part of members of this house. The letter concerns a railway built some time ago as an extension to an existing railway in my constituency for the purpose of drawing iron ore.

The communication reads as follows:

Once again the ore route from Marmora to Picton has claimed the life of one of our citizens, on one of the level crossings constructed relatively a very few years ago.

At the very time the railways across the country were being forced to eliminate the hazard of level crossings because of ever-increasing motor traffic, this ore service was allowed to maintain and construct any number of these crossings with insignificant markers and with no warning lights or signals. The resultant tragedies, including the one this past week, shock us year after year, and the loss of our citizens is a severe blow to the community. Many others have narrowly missed a similar accident, including one of our local businessmen.

Totally aside from the grief occasioned the families of these unfortunate citizens, the paramount consideration, we can but wonder which is the most valuable to our communities, the life and productivity of these citizens over a lifetime, or extra dollars in the immediate balance sheets of the railways. If millions can be spent to speed rail traffic, why cannot expenditures be made at the same time, to safeguard crossings for the motor- ing public.

The demand for additional safeguards on this ore route—

I add to this, Mr. Speaker, "on all railways in Canada".

—calls for the support of every local organization and municipal body.

[Mr. Fawcett.]

And I add to that, Mr. Speaker, "calls for the support of this parliament as well to take the leadership in this cause".

To date it has been the motorcar that has been struck; tomorrow it may be a loaded bus.

The time has come for every level crossing in this or any other community to afford the protection of signal lights and semaphores.

I admonish the government to see that this 68 miles of railway is protected at every crossing with modern, bona fide, tested devices which will protect human life.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the house went into committee thereon, Mr. Rinfret in the chair.

Clause 1 agreed to.

On clause 2—*Competitive bids or tenders.*

Mr. Bell (Saint John-Albert): Mr. Chairman, may I ask whether the minister gave any information in his statement about the date it is expected to start the operation of carrying the ore?

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, if the committee will agree, my hon. friend the Minister without Portfolio has informed himself particularly about this bill. If he could answer these factual questions I will deal with the political ones, if there are any.

Mr. Bell (Saint John-Albert): In that connection, Mr. Chairman, I think I can say we would not mind hearing from the junior minister of transport. May I say that due to some transportation difficulties which some members of this parliament had yesterday the hon. member is beginning to learn very quickly about transportation problems in Canada.

Mr. Turner: I just want to say, Mr. Chairman, that it was a very pleasant lunch for both the hon. member for Saint John-Albert and the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre yesterday when we were diverted because of fog.

In answer to the hon. member's question, the company hopes to get into full production in the spring or the beginning of 1968. Therefore, construction of the line should be finished by the end of 1967. If that is to be done, the grading and other work must start this summer, virtually immediately.

Mr. Starr: What will be the anticipated profit annually from this railway?