

Mr. ERNEST LAPOINTE: What amount has been paid by the Government under this Act?

Mr. REID: I will answer that question when we are in Committee on the Bill. If hon. gentlemen desire any information their questions will appear in Hansard and the information will be on hand when we go into Committee on the Bill. When the House is considering the Bill in Committee I will have an official from the Railway Commission here to afford all the information hon. gentlemen desire.

Mr. ROBB: The law at present as I understand only applies to railways already in existence, and the new legislation will enable assistance to be given to new railways.

Mr. REID: It is not proposed to deal with anything more than continue the law as it stands at present, until the Consolidated Railway Act comes into effect, which, of course, will nullify this legislation. If the present Bill is not passed, and the Consolidated Railway Act is delayed for some time, or even if it should not pass the House this session, we shall be powerless to continue this subsidizing of railway crossings.

Mr. FELDING: If these provisions are taken from the original Act I have no objection to offer, but I should think the language might be made clearer.

Mr. NESBITT: The minister says that the date should be 1919. Is it intended to cover the railways that were built previous to 1909? I think he will find that the Railway Board has power now to deal with crossings constructed since that date.

Mr. REID: The hon. member from Russell drew my attention to the last date in the resolution which appears as 1909. This refers to all level highway crossings in existence ten years ago. I see no reason why the date should not be changed to 1919, thus making the resolution applicable to all highway crossings in existence at the present time.

Mr. NESBITT: The Minister had better look the matter up before he makes the change.

Mr. REID: We can amend it, if necessary, when the Bill is in Committee.

Mr. VIEN: Is this to apply only to railways incorporated under federal charter?

Mr. REID: Yes.

[Mr. J. D. Reid.]

Mr. VIEN: If the Government determines upon the nationalization of Canadian railways, we shall have only two great railway systems, the Canadian Government Railways and the Canadian Pacific Railway. I do not see why we should now determine for a period of ten years the policy of the Canadian Government in the matter of aid in the construction of highway crossings, particularly in view of the fact that our railway policy is not yet finally decided. The Canadian Pacific Railway can construct without assistance such crossings as are required by the regulations of the Board of Railway Commissioners. I suggest, in view of all the circumstances, that this proposed legislation be not extended over a longer period than one year, or two years at the outside.

Mr. REID: My hon. friend suggests that under a policy of the nationalization of railways there will be only two great railway systems in Canada, the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Canadian National Railways; that the Government would in any case pay for crossings constructed on its own lines, and that we should not assist the Canadian Pacific Railway Company in the construction of highway crossings required under the regulations of the Railway Commission. The Canadian National Railways are now practically all under the direction of the Board of Railway Commissioners, and whatever should be done for the Canadian National Railways should also be done for every road that is under the jurisdiction of the Railway Commission. Otherwise, you do an injustice to the Canadian Pacific or to any other privately-owned road which is subject to the regulations of the Railway Commission. No partiality should be shown to the Government roads; all should be treated on the same basis.

Mr. VIEN: I agree that all these lines should be on the same footing, but I would do away entirely with the granting of aid in the constructing of highway crossings. So far as the Canadian Government Railway system is concerned, it does not matter much whether or not we aid the construction of highway crossings, because if we do so we simply transfer money from one department to another. I repeat that the Canadian Pacific Railway Company are financially strong enough to look after the building of highway crossings on their own lines without assistance. They come under the jurisdiction of the Board of Railway Commissioners; let that board decide what