

*Railway Act*

discernible when the headlights of a car 500 or 1,000 feet away illuminated them. I think it would be particularly useful to have a broken line of marks which would allow a motorist to see there was an obstruction ahead even in fog or rain. Personally I have yet to see, particularly in northern Ontario, when driving around the country any of these box cars marked in a fashion to provide the protection which this house had agreed was necessary.

I realize that these devices are very expensive to instal, but I had understood it was agreed that it was mandatory to instal them on all new cars; that when locomotives or rolling stock were built it was compulsory that they be given this reflective marking, which was to be paid for by the fund. By this means, in a relatively short time we could paint all the box cars with this reflective paint so that sooner or later they would give this protection.

I have not seen, to my knowledge, any cars in northern Ontario so marked. It may be that they are marked, but if they are then the reflective material used is of no value whatsoever. The minister may have some information on this and it might be possible, before the bill comes before us, for him to indicate whether there are any of these cars in the local yards in Ottawa which we could look at. I think we have been wasting our money if this provision does not give better protection than that which I have seen on the new cars of the Canadian National Railways, the markings of which are in no way, in my opinion, reflective.

This matter is very important, Mr. Chairman. Much useless slaughter occurs on our highways because of the inability of motorists to ascertain when trains are approaching level crossings. There are no doubt many areas where the municipalities are going to have to be given some assistance to ascertain how they can provide separation of grade in a reasonable manner. One of the previous speakers mentioned that the municipalities, the towns, villages and townships, are quite often more interested in providing this protection than the department of highways. It would seem quite easy for the department of highways in most cases to provide grade separation on new track if the traffic crossing it so warrants. But for municipalities, and especially small municipalities, it is difficult to find the money and sometimes, until disaster strikes, to find the will and support necessary to provide these facilities.

I mentioned the fact that in my home town, which is a relatively small town, there was considerable complaint about children having to cross a level crossing which was situated about three blocks from where signals

[Mr. Peters.]

were installed near the station. There was considerable debate over whether a new block signal should be installed or whether they should hook a relay on to the block system already there. While that matter was being debated, because the problem was not immediate nothing was done and a woman was killed. Within a few days these block signals were installed; it seems that the money was forthcoming.

I strongly urge that the technical advice available to the department should be supplied to the provinces and the municipalities, as well as to some of the railways which do not come under the board of transport commissioners. I do not think it would be difficult for us to furnish this information.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Ricard:** Mr. Chairman, I would not want the resolution now before us to be disposed of, without submitting to the Minister of Transport (Mr. McIlraith) a few observations concerning the welfare of the inhabitants of my riding of St. Hyacinthe-Bagot.

The minister is well aware that my riding is criss-crossed by both our railway systems, the Canadian Pacific and the Canadian National. My riding is cut in half by two main lines operated by the Canadian National, and the numerous level crossings are a hazard to the lives of my fellow citizens. I submit that all necessary measures should be taken to avoid further accidents.

In the last few years, with the co-operation of the minister's predecessor, many level crossings were equipped with light signals. Unfortunately, at certain crossings, serious accidents have occurred quite recently. I am thinking of the accident which killed several people at St. Eugene, and of another one which killed two inhabitants of Montreal at St. Liboire.

Flashing signals have now been installed, but it is most unfortunate that action had not been taken sooner to spare lives.

On the other hand, I know that a request for flashing signal lights has been made concerning level crossings at St. George and St. Edward in the parish of St. Liboire. Orders have been issued for the construction of a protective system at those two places.

I also ask the minister if he could not use his influence to speed things up even more.

There is also the crossing at St. Augustin for which no request has been made, in view of its importance, special consideration should be given to the installation of an adequate protective system there.

I would also like to renew the request I made some time ago to the minister for the installation of flashing light signals at