

regard to this rail line relocation. It is certainly something that will have to be studied very carefully in the standing committee.

Mr. Stuart Leggatt (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, I am glad you have been able to recognize this corner of the House. It makes one feel a little less uncomfortable around here when that happens. I wish to say, on behalf of our party, that we welcome this legislation. However, we are slightly amazed at the length of time it has taken the minister to finally get it on the order paper. I recall during the 1972 election campaign—

An hon. Member: Not 1974?

Mr. Leggatt: No, 1972; 1974 is coming.

Mr. O'Sullivan: Is that a promise?

Mr. Leggatt: During the election campaign, on October 10, 1972, the minister issued a very interesting press release. At that time, the minister was Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, and the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Jamieson) was Minister of Transport. In a moment of euphoria approximately 20 days prior to the election, they issued a very interesting press release which in part reads:

Special federal assistance is being prepared to move railways out of cities and let people in, two federal ministers announced today . . .

Mr. Jamieson and Mr. Basford jointly announced the intended legislative package as an instance of federal policy in key fields, such as transportation, being directed to the best urban impact it can make.

● (1650)

We welcome the legislation, but the length of time it has taken to place it before the House for consideration is an indication of the priority the government places on urban issues. There is a lot of oil, a lot of wheat and a lot of lumber in this country, but the major problems in this nation are urban in nature and the sooner the House understands this the sooner the people will get more adequate representation here.

I must say I am pleased with the co-operation shown, the readiness among members in all quarters of the House to expedite the passage of this bill. The last bill of this nature was presented approximately 20 days before a federal election, and this one may well be before this chamber 74 days before a federal election. I believe the timing is appropriate. I hope its fate will not be to die on the order paper in the event of a federal election; I hope we shall not have to wait another year and a half before we see it.

Mr. Basford: Don't worry, we shall re-introduce it.

Mr. Leggatt: Somebody has said that the federal government has most of the power, the provincial governments have most of the jurisdiction and the municipalities have all the problems. The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. McKinnon) described in some detail the plan the city of Winnipeg has in mind in connection with rail relocation, and the minister responsible for this legislation indicated the intention was to spend \$250 million over five years. Mr. Speaker, the cost of moving the rails from Winnipeg alone will amount to nearly \$100 million, not far short of half the amount allocated for the

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whole program. It might be cheaper to move the city of Winnipeg and leave the rails where they are!

Mr. O'Sullivan: Stanley would like that.

Mr. Leggatt: This is some indication of the size of the undertaking. It seems to me the minister has underestimated what is involved. It is true that \$250 million may sound like a lot of money, but it is a small amount in terms of urban expenditures required.

The increase in the grade crossing fund from \$500,000 to \$1 million is really small potatoes when one considers the extent of the increase in construction costs over the last five years—at least 150 per cent. I know that under section 16(1) of the bill special provision is made for projects which cost more than \$1,250,000. I think the minister can expect that all the applicants will try to squeeze in under section 16(1). If they do, he will find his figure of \$250 million wholly inadequate. I suggest that in many cases we should not relocate rail stations outside the centre of communities. A single track into an urban rail station makes a lot of sense. More important, when we consider relocation of tracks in urban centres, we should not allow ourselves to be hypnotized by the commercial value of the property. What will happen in the case of many of these communities is this: the blight of freight yards and tracks will be replaced by the blight of Eaton's and the blight of Simpsons-Sears or those high-rise bleak monoliths which sit in the centres of communities and provide nothing in terms of making them livable places. As the minister has pointed out, this measure will improve the urban environment but if we do not consider the value of the property as it relates to people rather than its commercial value, if we fail to appraise its value in terms of space, or parks, or livability, then the purpose of the bill will not be achieved.

The biggest problem in my community, in this area, at least, is a rail crossing which is creating a particularly dangerous situation because it is in a key position in an urban centre; a million people have to use this crossing to get to the emergency ward of our local hospital. This is important because they are running the risk of cardiac arrest—

Mr. Andre: Those people shouldn't be driving!

Mr. Leggatt: There is a real risk to people who are trying to get to the emergency ward. In addition, there is the usual urban frustration, line-ups for half an hour or even longer as trains go by at 15 minute intervals.

One of the provisions I welcome, and it may be one of the most significant and imaginative, is the provision, as I read it in section 6(2)(a), for what is effectively the expropriation of track time in order to give urban communities a chance to use those railroads for urban transit purposes. I wish the minister had gone farther with regard to expropriating track time. Why not expropriate the whole company and have a national transportation system. In other words, take over the Canadian Pacific, in which case we would be making some real progress.

Mr. Basford: Hear, hear!

Mr. Leggatt: I am glad to see the minister pounding his desk. In any event I can recall, as an alderman in my