

*Railways*

held over to the sixth year. Why not spend the money slotted for those five years and then provide new money beginning in the sixth year? We have a ridiculous situation where the money that should be going into grade crossings, grade separations, rail line relocation and urban transit is now being presented to provinces in lump sums with the provinces being asked to allocate those funds to one, two or three major projects. They then have to wait for a year or two for the federal government's share. I wish the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council a lot of luck. I hope he can persuade the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) and the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) to increase the funding to accomplish the intent of this bill.

The same thing applies generally in respect of requirements under the Railway Act and the National Transportation Act in the whole area of transportation of dangerous goods and safety in rail transportation. The person-years under the CTC stay the same. The CTC is not able to regulate railroads because of inadequate numbers of staff and inadequate inspectors. Who is going to check to see if the chain-link fences are properly installed and maintained when we do not have enough people now?

The hon. member's bill is designed to solve one of the many problems of a transportation system running through urban metropolitan areas. It applies not only to railways but to trucking companies, airlines and pipelines. There are a host of things still beneath the surface. There are many hazards, problems and dangers. This bill is aimed at correcting one of them; we will agree with that, but I just wish the parliamentary secretary could persuade the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin), the Minister of Finance and the President of the Treasury Board to bring in legislation dealing with a lot of other similar problems.

I hope the House will agree to approve this bill on second reading. We will be able to go into the matter in greater detail in committee when the bill comes up for consideration, although that will not be likely until after the estimates are out. At that time the minister will have to come in with amendments to the Railway Act to incorporate the subject matter of hon. member's bill.

**Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to say a few words on this bill. I have some concerns about it, as does the hon. member from the New Democratic Party. The bill appears to give the Canadian Transport Commission authority to order the railway to build a special type of fence if the municipality applies for same. The Explanatory Note in the bill says:

—to empower the Canadian Transport Commission to order the construction of six-foot chain-link fences along railway rights-of-way. The cost of putting up the fence would be shared equally by the railway company and the municipality—

I wonder why the Canadian government is not sharing in this project. If this bill is that important, I wonder why the federal government did not bring it in and pay a portion of the cost. Is it because we do not have the authority to pass a bill which will place some expenditures on the part of the govern-

ment, although we have authority to provide expenses, pretty high ones, on the part of municipalities?

The grade crossing fund has provided funds for a number of years for this type of thing but the method was changed by the Canadian government. I might say that change was not made with the approval of all the provinces. The grade crossing fund was a very important fund. Much of the work done as a result of the grade crossing fund is no longer being done. There is a most urgent need for something to be done at level crossings. There are far more people being killed at level crossings than on the bare tracks. If we take a look at the statistics, the number of people being killed at level crossings is higher than for any other type of accident, barring a railway wreck where hundreds of people could be killed.

This bill does nothing to restore what we lost when we changed the method of handling the grade crossing fund. Every municipality has large expenses. The importance of preventing people being killed at level crossings is not being addressed by this bill. Instead, the matter being addressed is away down on the list of importance.

To place this type of expenditure on a municipality because we want to protect the people at a busy intersection or along a busy rail line, in my view, is not being fair. Protection of life and limb along the railway was accepted as a national responsibility a good many years ago. At least the government had some responsibility.

Several years ago the federal government then in power came up with the grade crossing fund. Through that fund, hundreds of level crossings were protected. The only way to save lives at level crossings is to instal either an underpass or an overpass. Lights and bells at level crossings are helpful, but people are still being killed at crossings protected by lights and bells. Scores of municipalities in this country today would like lights, bells or gates at level crossings, but they cannot afford them because a large portion of the cost accrues to the municipality concerned, as do all the maintenance costs. Yet here we are working out another way for municipalities to spend money.

In all of the years I have spent involved with railways, I have never had a request from a municipality or an individual to build a gigantic expensive chain-link fence along the whole line of railway. Unless a chain-link fence is installed for a long distance, it will not be effective. Today many people who provide overpasses for pedestrians have to fence a considerable distance. Many are put in by cities at their own expense. In doing that they have to provide these fences for a great distance so as to prevent people from crossing over the tracks. People take chances. They may not see or hear a train coming and they will not go up over the fence. I have seen people jumping over the chain part when nothing is coming because they do not want to exert themselves going up and down the overpass. I question the wisdom of installing this type of fence. You can put in many miles of fence at a cost of thousands of dollars, with the result that municipalities will have additional unasked for expenses.