

for its reform, or its abolition when it declared that railways should continue in the right to convert public crossings into shambles.

Now, I take up another newspaper in Ontario, published at Galt, where a coroner's inquest inquired into the death of the driver of a horse and buggy over a level crossing:

The jury returned the following verdict: 'Your jury find from the evidence submitted that the late Frederick Reid, of Goderich, came to his death by being struck by a Grand Trunk train while crossing the Waterloo road on Friday, September 20, 1907; also that on account of the great number of accidents at level crossings we would recommend the Railway Commission to consider the advisability of having them abolished.'

This newspaper writer evidently thinks that the Railway Commission has the power to control these matters. The Railway Commission, of course, has no right to do so, and will have no right to do so unless the Act is amended. The point is good as it stands, but if we amend the Act as proposed, and as twice unanimously declared for by this House, the Railway Commission can act. But the quotation I have given helps to show how the newspapers regard the matter. Now, those are the things that have been urged against this Bill that, it seems to me, can no longer be urged.

I have taken up a good deal of time, and I apologize for it. But in extenuation, I plead the importance of the matter to this country as well as the strong feeling I have upon the subject and also my duty out of respect to the two hundred and fourteen members of this House who supported this legislation. I ask this House again to pass this Bill and send it to the Senate for their concurrence.

Hon. GEO. P. GRAHAM (Minister of Railways and Canals). I think I ought to be credited, to a certain extent, as the cause of the speech of my hon. friend (Mr. Lancaster) this afternoon. Possibly, had I had time to communicate with him before the House met to-day, we might have been deprived of his eloquent and earnest address. It is said by some people that many ardent protectionists by day are very busy freetraders at night. Those of us who urge strongly that the speed of trains shall be limited are among the gentlemen who always want to take the fastest trains that run. And, perhaps, there is no class of men in Canada who are more clearly on record in that regard than the members of the House of Commons, who, when they found that their passes were not good for the fastest trains, those that run through cities, towns and villages at breakneck speed, almost rebelled in order to have their passes made good on those trains. Sometimes our acts outside this House are not wholly consistent, perhaps, with the Acts

we pass in this House. However, this question of level crossings is one that deserves very serious consideration. I am sure that my hon. friend did not mean to bring undue pressure to bear on me when he quoted as positive proof in substantiation of his contention the words of my old friend Hon. G. W. Ross. It is a pleasure to me to know that he is an apostle of Mr. Ross, in this respect at least.

Now the question of level crossings and their dangers is one that will not down in this country. The accidents that happen, not only in Canada—because perhaps Canada is as free as any other country, if not freer than some other countries, in that respect—forces this matter on our consideration. I am not one of those who cry out against corporations, or against railways because they are run by corporations. We have to remember that we urged, and coaxed, if I may use that word, some of these railway corporations to invest their money, and their money has been invested for years, for which they have got little or no return, in some cases. But that is no excuse for any laxity in protecting the rights of the people. The question of transportation is one of great importance, and the methods of moving people to and fro is one of great interest to the people themselves. But the paramount interest, to my mind, is the protection of the lives of the people. This may be regarded by some as a small matter, but to my mind it is not a small matter. We have throughout the country districts, leaving out anything which this Bill touches at all, many crossings that are very dangerous. Every member of this House can call to mind some crossing in his own constituency, the approach to which is very dangerous to the travelling public. While it would be rash to go to the extent of insisting that something should be done at these crossings all at once, I am in hearty sympathy with the movement to approach the subject gradually, and take in thickly settled parts, such as cities, towns and villages. While saying this, I have no desire to encroach upon the rights of the railways. We have now a commission and that commission is to be enlarged. It has been proved heretofore that the duties placed upon that commission have been so onerous and so numerous that the members have not been able to perform them, and if we placed this work upon that commission with its present number, we would perhaps burden them unduly. But it is the intention of the government, with the approval of this House, which I believe will be unanimous, to enlarge this commission and provide that these complaints shall practically go to the decision of the commission, and the orders of the old Privy Council will be included as well, to avoid certain injustices that might otherwise be done. I do not wish to make any further remarks, only to say that I concur in this