

*Railway Act*

prevent many of the accidents which take place. Has this cheaper type of device, this radio controlled device activated from a locomotive installation, been considered by the department both as a safety and economy measure?

**Mr. McIlraith:** I find myself a little vague as to the device the hon. member is talking about. Is he talking about the device that would be in the automobile?

**Mr. Thompson:** Specifically, Mr. Chairman, I am thinking about the device that was demonstrated and recommended at the time of the investigation into the grade crossing accident involving a school bus at Lamont. At that time this safety device was suggested, and it certainly could protect all public vehicles. It would be a two instrument device, the controlling device being on the locomotive itself and the receiving device in the vehicle on the highway. It was also indicated at that time that it was so cheap that even private passenger cars could install the receiving end of this automatic signal device.

**Mr. McIlraith:** Mr. Chairman, I now understand the hon. gentleman's reference. The safety device was considered by the board, but the difficulty is that it would not be effective unless it were adequately maintained in the motor vehicle. That is one difficulty in the matter; nor can the board require the installation of such a device in a bus, for example. There are some other limitations of a more technical nature, but I have given the short answer to the question. There are other lesser objections to it.

**Mr. Thompson:** I was concerned, Mr. Chairman, with the comparative cheapness of this device, and I was thinking particularly of public vehicles. The accident I was talking about, which happened in the city of Red Deer only a few months ago, concerned a taxi all the occupants of which were wiped out. It would seem to me that while you could not require it to be put in private vehicles, there would certainly be co-operation on the part of provincial authorities, who would be happy to give public vehicles this protection. At the same time it should be made available to private vehicles. I think something like this should be considered, in view of its cheapness, contrasted with the expense of the automatic signal device the minister is mentioning, in terms of its being considered for 400 crossings at the present time. I believe something like this ought to be considered in every possible aspect.

[Translation]

**Mr. Caouette:** Mr. Chairman, this resolution seems entirely in order and even [Mr. Thompson.]

commendable, because it recommends the granting of subsidies to the railway grade crossing fund for a period of three years.

All Canadians know that grade crossings constitute a public danger which must be eliminated as much as possible through the efforts of the Canadian government.

Automatic safety signals are needed not only in some regions but throughout the country. By warning of danger, they will prevent a great number of deaths.

However, grade crossings are still tolerated in some cities. May I quote one example about which I wrote to the minister in order to draw his attention to the fact that in Noranda, in the riding of Villeneuve, two railway tracks cross Murdoch street in the very centre of town. Indeed, there are automatic signals but sometimes people must wait as much as 20 to 30 minutes before being able to cross these tracks. Traffic is at a standstill during this time. We request that a viaduct or an elevated road be built which would eliminate the dangers of these grade crossings.

We have now before us resolutions providing for works to be performed in Canada in order to give employment during winter to the greatest possible number of people. If amounts allotted to winter works were spent to build elevated tracks or viaducts wherever traffic is heavy enough, it seems to me that the grade crossing fund might make a large contribution to their erection.

Mr. Chairman, this matter is very serious and the settling of this problem most urgent.

I suggest that grade crossings should not only be equipped with automatic signals, but they should be eliminated altogether and replaced by viaducts or elevated tracks wherever there is a need for them.

[Text]

**Mr. Rapp:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Transport pertaining to this matter of railway grade crossings. What is the cost sharing arrangement among federal, provincial and municipal governments? The experience I have had with the applications presented by some municipalities is such that the railroads, it appears to me, are very reluctant to have these crossings protected, although there is a great need for this to be done. I have the impression that the cost sharing arrangement does not appeal very much to the railroads, in some cases. Also, is the cost sharing arrangement the same in all cases, or is it different in the case of some crossings than it is in others? Would the minister give me an answer to this question, please?

**Mr. McIlraith:** Mr. Chairman, to the extent that I can I will be very glad to do so. As to