

TRANSPORT

SUGGESTED CHANGE IN JURISDICTION OVER GRADE CROSSINGS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Raymond Rock (Jacques-Cartier-Lasalle): I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Transport with regard to the tragic accident at Dorion and another the following day at Pointe Claire. Since the initiative in separating grade crossings is left with the municipalities and provincial road departments, and since the federal grade crossing fund provides 80 per cent of the cost, up to \$500,000 toward each new grade separation, would the Minister of Transport look into the possibility of having the Board of Transport Commissioners initiate, plan and execute these works in the future rather than leaving it up to the municipalities and the provincial departments?

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Minister of Transport): There is before the committee on transport at the present time, as my hon. friend is aware, a transportation bill which deals with the grade crossing fund. I hope the hon. gentleman will raise his question in that committee where there will be a better opportunity of considering its implications than is available to us on the orders of the day.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérald Laniel (Beauharnois-Salaberry): Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of Transport aware of the fact that the Board of Transport Commissioners is now granting an extension of the time limit provided for in certain orders making it compulsory for some railways to instal automatic protection signals at some railway crossings? If so, who will be responsible for the eventual deaths resulting from these time extensions?

[English]

Mr. Pickersgill: I will be glad to look into that question though, of course, it does not arise in connection with this regrettable case, because the signals were there on the site on this occasion. What we want to find out is whether they worked effectively.

[Translation]

Mr. Auguste Choquette (Loftbinière): Mr. Speaker, may I put a supplementary question?

Excuse me if there are several questions, but this is because the emergency debate has been waived.

Inquiries of the Ministry

I would ask the Minister of Transport whether it is his intention, in the course of this investigation, to make sure that this commission will operate in such a way as to allow witnesses to put before the commission their grievances against all railway crossings in Canada and that it will hear the suggestions that may be put forward?

[English]

Mr. Pickersgill: It is the intention of the Board of Transport Commissioners to hold a public inquiry with respect to this particular accident as soon as the investigatory work has been completed. At such an inquiry any witness who had anything to contribute either in the way of evidence or, I would imagine, any suggestion to offer in that context would of course be heard.

As for the particular question raised by the hon. gentleman, we all know he is very much concerned about an accident in his own constituency in which four lives were lost. I believe the broadest possible inquiry should be held into all these cases, because it is just as regrettable to have four lives lost as it is to have a larger number lost.

Mr. Raymond Langlois (Mégantic): Will the Minister of Transport also inquire into an accident which happened a mile or so down the track, this time involving a C.P.R. train; in this case the passengers had time to get out of the car which was hit. The train was caught between red light signals and the gates a little farther down. Would the minister inquire into this?

Mr. Pickersgill: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

TRADE

POSSIBLE IMPORTATION OF FISHING TRAWLERS FROM POLAND

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. Russell MacEwan (Pictou): I have a question for the Minister of Trade and Commerce arising out of the fact that while he was on his travels in Poland officials there discussed with him the possible sale of Polish fishing trawlers to Canada. Will the minister assure the Canadian shipbuilding industry that no action will be taken by the government which would be detrimental to its interests?

Hon. Robert Winters (Minister of Trade and Commerce): I do not think the hon. member need fear that such transactions are imminent.