

traffic from existing grade crossings. In addition to the financial formula, there is a special provision which will allow the Canadian Transport Commission to make recommendations for payment of a special grant.

The new act maintains the provisions of the Railway Act whereby a railway crossing must be in existence for at least three years before an application can be made for a grant from the railway grade crossing fund toward construction of a grade separation. The act provides exceptions to the three-year rule. These are designed to meet the observations of municipalities relative to this question. First, when the new grade crossing is required by a railway for a relocation or rerouting project, the three-year period will not apply. Second, when it is required for a new highway traffic rerouting scheme, it will not apply. The exception to the three year limitation provision is designed to deal with the situation in which there is a rerouting or relocation proposal, or a new highway traffic rerouting scheme. Then, the three-year period is waived.

● (1630)

Grants provided for reconstruction of or improvement to an existing grade separation will be made available where the grade separation has existed for at least 15 years. Formerly, the limitation was to grade separations that existed prior to June 29, 1955. This provision is included, as well, in line with representations which have been made to us.

In conclusion, I suggest this bill deserves the support of all members of the House. I very much appreciate, for my own part and that of my colleagues, the arrangements which members opposite have entered into for dealing with this bill. On behalf of the government I extend my thanks to them.

The provisions of the bill have been considered carefully. It holds out major benefits, in my view, for the reshaping of Canadian towns and cities. It pays renewed attention in parts II and III to the issue of public safety at rail crossings. It will greatly extend the federal government's ability to respond to the needs of our cities and to assist in improving the environment of most cities of Canada. It is an important urban initiative on the part of the government, one which I know is eagerly awaited by mayors, municipalities and provinces across the country.

**Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg South Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak on Bill C-27, an important bill concerning rail line relocation. My colleagues and I are not taking a negative approach to the bill. We point out that exhaustive studies and consultations must take place with interested parties with regard to social and environmental objectives and the cost aspects. A number of cities are waiting with anticipation passage of the rail line relocation bill, namely, Toronto, Winnipeg and Wetaskiwin. An exhaustive study has been conducted in Winnipeg by a firm known as Damas and Smith. It brought out what is known as the Winnipeg Railway Study, to which I intend to refer.

According to the report, the objectives of the rail study were to develop alternative plans of railway facilities to those presently in existence which would appear to be technically feasible and desirable from an economic and

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social point of view in the realization of a superior and more amenable plan for the future development of the urban community and its transportation facilities. The study recommended that most railway tracks be removed from Winnipeg's downtown area, freeing large amounts of real estate for urban development. Three alternatives being considered actively range in cost from \$50 million to \$92 million. Each of the four proposed schemes would have a major impact on the over-all future planning of the city, of its transportation systems and its industrial development.

One scheme recommends common running rights for CNR and CPR through downtown Winnipeg, plus a combination of both railway passenger terminals into one union station. One scheme would bury the railway tracks in the central core, with high banks for traffic and noise separation, and a further scheme supported tunnelling for much of the downtown track. All schemes took account of downtown development and found this to be in line with the ideas presented in the study. The study found that major economies and benefits would result for all parties involved in relocation.

The study says that the proposed program would bring the following benefits: release 200 acres of CP yards for more appropriate use; remove barrier effect of CN mainline and allow redevelopment of 50 acres and reductions in road-rail conflict and opportunities to extend and connect natural arterial connections.

If simultaneous relocation of both lines is not feasible, then relocation of the CP yards and main line is the main priority, with CN relocation being secondary. It is stressed, however, that both should occur simultaneously. However, in spite of what the report asserts, there are a great many people in Winnipeg who have grave reservations about the document. There are a great many questions still to be answered. They are, first, is rail relocation a pressing and urgent need compared to other concerns such as providing low income housing, improving deteriorated areas and reducing property taxes? Second, how will the citizens of Winnipeg benefit from the plan? Which citizens will benefit most? Third, does implementation of the rail study commit us to other plans such as the Downtown Development Plan and the Winnipeg Area Transportation Study? Is this plan really a way of getting things in via the back door? Fourth, where will the marshalling yards be relocated? Fifth, the study refers to the St. James Corridor. What is meant by this? I will go into detail in a few moments. Sixth, what adverse effects on the surrounding area will result from the relocation of the CP classification yards in Rosser, Manitoba? Seventh, are we to suppose that similar effects are to be incurred in that area in which the marshalling yards are relocated? Eighth, what about allocating moneys for other equally important projects like runway relocation? Ninth, what effect will the plan have upon our leisure areas? One scheme has tracks running through the centre of one of Winnipeg's most beautiful parks, Assiniboine. Imagine that, Mr. Speaker. Someone wants to put a railway line through Assiniboine Park, one of the most beautiful parks in Canada. I hope the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Richardson), one of the representatives of the area, is noting my comments about what is proposed for Assiniboine Parks.