

Mr. LANCASTER. I should have thought that the House would take my word for it.

Mr. FIELDING. I think the point would be whether 'Hansard' is the official record in the strict parliamentary sense.

Mr. SPEAKER. I am not sure that it would be. I do not care to press the matter unduly in this particular instance, but I think the practice is as I have stated, and should be followed as carefully as possible. It may be suggested that the printed 'Hansard' would be the official record. I cannot say as to this at the moment.

Mr. LANCASTER. There is some repetition of what I stated, but I do not want to embarrass the question at issue with a debate on a point of order. This is too serious a question for me to jeopardize by attempting anything of that kind. I do not therefore, wish to take any chance on what would be right for me to say, because it is hard to argue a case if you are in doubt of your right to say what you wish to say on the subject. I do not think that my case is so weak, either, that I have anything to gain by running the risk of diverting attention from it.

Well, since what has happened to this Bill has happened, the press of this country has spoken. Boards of trade and other municipal institutions have expressed their opinion; coroners' inquest juries have dealt with it. You can hardly pick up a newspaper but you find one or other of two things. In one day's newspaper, you will find that a person has been killed at one of these level crossings, and in a newspaper a few days after that you will find an expression of opinion from some tribunal other than the Senate declaring that the legislation which was introduced last year and thrown out by the Senate, should be passed. Let me read, for instance, the resolution of the Board of Trade of Toronto, passed as soon as this Bill was adopted in this House and sent to the Senate:

Resolved that the council of the board of trade heartily endorses the Bill introduced by Mr. E. A. Lancaster in the Dominion House to provide for the proper protection of level railway crossings in cities, towns and villages, and trust that it may become law.

There is an expression from the citizens' point of view, and that from the board of trade of the largest city in the province of Ontario. Similar resolutions have been passed by boards of trade in other places. Now, I have here a newspaper published in the interests of the farmers—'The Farmers Advocate,' published in London, Ont. It has an article headed 'The deadly level crossing.' This article says:

Mr. E. A. Lancaster, M.P., for Lincoln and Niagara, has, for the fourth time, we believe, introduced his Bill in the Canadian

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parliament for the protection of the lives of the people on level railway crossings.

I would just interrupt the reading of this article there to say that this paper knows that this legislation was not hasty, but that for four years it had been discussed, as I have said.

It proposes that, after January 1, 1908, railways must protect their crossings in the thickly-settled portions of cities, towns and villages, or else slow down. Newspaper scribes treat the subject with more or less frivolity, describing the measure as a 'hardy annual,' a 'perennial plant,' and so on. Last year the Bill was incorporated in the General Railway Act, but was amputated in the Senate, that graveyard of not a little legislation in the interest of the people. Meanwhile, the railways have gone on remorselessly killing the people and destroying horses and rigs, evidently bent on making time records at all hazards. The list of these accidents during the past year has been appalling. Success to Mr. Lancaster's Bill.

Now, let us go a little further west. I take up the Winnipeg 'Telegram,' and find the following article:

MISCHIEVOUS INTERFERENCE.

The Canadian Senate, in the dying hours of the present session is supplying in its own acts sufficient reason for its reformation. Yesterday it distinguished itself by vetoing Mr. Lancaster's amendment which prohibits railway trains from running faster than ten miles an hour over level crossings in cities, towns and incorporated villages.

This is a railway reform which Mr. Lancaster has advocated for some years, and which he finally succeeded in inducing the House of Commons to endorse. Why the Senate should stand in the way of a piece of popular legislation of this kind is not apparent. It is assuredly flying in the face of public opinion when it refuses to co-operate with the lower House in such an essential measure of public safety.

The level crossing is a menace to public life under any circumstances. In congested communities it is a veritable death trap which every year claims hundreds of victims in Canada and United States. If the level crossing cannot be abolished in cities, towns and incorporated villages, or if it cannot be protected with gates or watchmen, then it is surely desirable that railway companies should limit the speed of their trains as proposed in Mr. Lancaster's amendment.

Nothing could be fairer than giving railways the option of protecting their crossings, or of reducing their speed at crossings where protection is not afforded.

The newspaper quite understands the fairness of the legislation as it gives the railway company the option of going to the Railway Commission and getting an order authorizing them to reduce the speed if they would rather not go to the little expense of making the crossing safe.

The House of Commons interpreted the overwhelming force of public opinion when it endorsed the Lancaster amendment, and the Senate made out an exceedingly good case