

see what the present Minister of Trade and Commerce said on that occasion. This was the statement he made:

I have argued in this house and before my own constituents and the people of my province for certain principles which I think should underlie and govern the making of a freight rate structure. I have argued that the fixation of rates is such a complicated problem that it should not be pitchforked into parliament, but rather that it should be dealt with by a competent board, that board in my estimation being the Board of Railway Commissioners.

A year ago I appeared before the board and in discussing the matter, particularly with the chairman, I found that British Columbia has never entered any appeal against freight rates on feed grain going into that province. I was told that there was no reason in the world why such an application should not be presented and should not receive favourable consideration. At the time I was there the appeal to the privy council was pending and nothing could be done, but now the appeal has been dismissed the case is wide open. I suggest to my hon. friend therefore that if he wants to get action he cannot obtain it in the way he is going at it, because parliament will not go back on what it did in 1903 and undertake to fix rates in this house. So that I appeal to my hon. friend to join the rest of us and appear before the board to present the case for the farmers. I suggest also, what I think is right, that it is not necessary to employ expensive counsel, as the province of British Columbia did in 1925; for any farmers' organization, any individual farmer, can be heard before the board. And I am sure that a member of parliament would also be heard. I suggest to my hon. friends opposite therefore that they join with us and that we go and present the case on behalf of the farmers with a view to getting some immediate action.

The hon. gentleman says that this bill has been on the order paper for three months. Well, the house has been in session since January 25 and this is April 17, so that he does not seem to have been very anxious to press the matter. If hon. gentlemen opposite are eager to get something for the farmers of our province, what they are trying for, namely, a lower rate on feed grain, they ought to join with us in presenting the case to the board. I am going to move an amendment which I hope will receive the support of this house:

That this bill be not read the second time but that, in the opinion of the house, the subject matter thereof should be referred at the earliest date to the Board of Railway Commissioners for Canada.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): I rise to a point of order. Is the proposed amendment in order? The provision which the hon. gentleman has in mind is the moving of an amendment to the motion for the second reading of the bill by the enunciation of a general principle which is in opposition to the general principle of the bill. I respectfully suggest that the principle embodied in the amendment is not in opposition to the general principle of the bill as introduced by my hon. friend.

Mr. MANION: I do not agree with my hon. friend. The principle of the bill is the question of freight rates, and the amendment is a suggestion that the question be referred to the board of railway commissioners. It is a different matter. I submit that it is in order.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): With respect to the point raised by my hon. friend—

Mr. MANION: Are we allowed to speak two or three times to the point of order?

Mr. SPEAKER: I understood the hon. member for Vancouver Centre (Mr. Mackenzie) to have spoken to the point of order.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): May I submit, with all due respect to the opinion of the Minister of Railways, that this does appear to be a peculiar transaction. Here we have an amendment the effect of which would be to refer from the House of Commons to the board of railway commissioners a request in connection with freight rates. I do not think I have ever known that to be done, although of course there is no reason why that should prevent its being done. I do not think however that the amendment is in order.

Mr. BARBER: The resolution does not propose that the House of Commons should refer this bill to the board of railway commissioners. It states that in the opinion of this house the subject matter of the resolution, which is the question of freight rates, should be referred at the earliest possible date to the board of railway commissioners.

Mr. LAPOINTE: I do not think the Minister of Railways is serious in his contention, when he says that the principle of the bill is the question of railway rates and that the amendment is that the question of railway rates should be referred to the railway commission.