

My intention is to ask the Government to allow this Bill to receive its second reading, and then to be sent to the committee who have at present in charge the consolidation of the Railway Act. It was useless for me to word this Bill in conformity with the old Railway Act, because that will be out of existence before the session closes. It was impossible for me to word it so as to fit it into the new Railway Act. Therefore, I ask the Government to allow this Bill to have its second reading, and that it then be sent on to the committee with instructions from this House that the provisions included in this Bill be embodied in the Railway Act which is being consolidated by the committee.

If it is true that the Saskatchewan Government appointed a commission and that this commission found that freight rates on the Great Lakes have been doubled since 1909, then if you place the shipping interests under the control of our Railway Commission, it will be up to the commission to see that these rates are placed at such a point that they will not only be fair to the producer and the consumer but to the freight carrying trade as well. Probably it would be well, Mr. Speaker, that I should read this clause of the Bill in order that the House may be informed as to the provisions which they contain. The first clause is:

1. In this Act unless the context otherwise requires, 'steamboat' means any vessel propelled wholly or in part by steam or by any machinery or power other than sails or oars.

The second clause is as follows:

2. The provisions of the Railway Act, Revised Statutes, 1906, chapter 37, relating to accommodation for traffic, tolls, classification of freight and tariffs shall, so far as applicable, apply 'mutatis mutandis' to all steamboat companies, steamboat owners and steamboats engaged on a regular route carrying passengers or freight or both from one port or place in Canada to another port or place in Canada, or from a port or place in Canada to a port or place out of Canada; and all traffic agreements between steamboat owners and railways and other persons and all questions of the places along the line of route where steamboats shall call for traffic and the time of call and the duration of stay shall be subject to the approval and control of the board.

Clause 3 deals with an entirely different subject. It extends the powers of the Railway Board to the control of special privileges. The Railway Commission have decided that they have not the power to grant certain privileges to manufacturers and individuals, such privileges as railway companies are at the present time granting. I

[Mr. J. E. Armstrong.]

need not go into details with reference to this matter more than to say that this provision places the right of any railway company in Canada to grant special privileges to manufacturers or individuals under the jurisdiction of the Railway Board and it gives the Railway Board the right to extend these privileges to any other manufacturer or individual. The board have decided, within the last year, that while certain privileges have been granted to certain manufacturers and individuals, they have not the power to extend those privileges to other manufacturers and individuals. This clause will definitely provide that in so far as these privileges are concerned, the board have absolute power to extend them to any manufacturer or individual.

The last clause of the Bill is for the purpose of preventing the improper handling of baggage and freight by the railway companies. Railway companies appear to be helpless when it comes to the handling of many products and particularly perishable products. The express company come into a district with their cars, the goods are taken by the men in charge of these cars, as if they were so much cordwood, or so much wood taken from a buzz saw, and fired up in the most careless and indifferent manner. We compel the fruit men in Canada to live up to the Fruit Marks Act, and we compel them to pack their goods in the most careful way. These goods are taken to the station and there they are handled in the most careless manner. This clause is designed to afford some protection to the fruit men. If they see a man handling goods in a careless and reckless way, the shippers are in a position to bring that man before a justice of the peace or compel him to explain why he has been conducting himself in such a way. There is not a member of the House who has done any considerable amount of travelling but will agree with me in the statement that the careless handling of baggage in Canada has become a serious question and one that must be dealt with. When the railway laws are being consolidated it is an opportune time for us to take up these matters and have the provisions to which I have referred included in the new Bill. Those who have travelled throughout the country must realize that baggage is handled like so much cordwood or baled hay, in a most careless and ridiculous manner. Clause 3 provides that men engaged in the handling of baggage shall be more careful and they are brought under certain restrictions provided by this Bill.