

That was their attitude. Those branches of shipping are as exempt to-day as they were made in 1911; they have remained exempt ever since.

Mr. NEILL: Do I understand the minister to say that the board of railway commissioners passed an order that the act was not to be enforced?

Mr. MANION: First, on February 15, 1911, they passed an order that it was to be put into effect, but six weeks later, on March 28, 1911, they said they had reconsidered the matter and put out a circular with the words I have just read, exempting the port to port shipping of the railway companies.

Mr. NEILL: Can the board of railway commissioners by issuing a circular do away with the law of the land?

Mr. MANION: I do not know; I cannot go into the details of that. I assume—I am only guessing now—that this act was to be put into effect by the board of railway commissioners, and they attempted to do it and found it was not feasible. I am giving the facts as given to me by my officers as part of the history of the attempt to put under the board of railway commissioners the port to port shipping of the railways. I do not believe that it is any more feasible to-day than it was at that time.

But in addition there is this to remember—at least this is how I understand it: that if this bill should become law Canadian shipping would be under the control of the board of railway commissioners, but tramps and foreign ships, would not, or at least they could so arrange shipping and rates that they might not be, so that it would result in unfair competition to our Canadian shipping.

Then another point is that the Department of Trade and Commerce handles the subsidies paid ships for carrying mails, for example, or passengers over certain routes. Shipping to which the Department of Trade and Commerce pays these subsidies is to-day under the control of that department in regard to rates and tolls just as it is proposed by this bill to give control to the board of railway commissioners. The subsidized steamships are to-day controlled by the Department of Trade and Commerce in that respect.

I am merely mentioning these things briefly; I am not attempting any elaborate discussion of the matter, but I have looked into it sufficiently to become convinced that it is not feasible. While far from question-

ing the hon. member's good faith—I concede that at once—at the same time I think the matter requires further consideration by the hon. gentleman himself and certainly by the government, before we could consent to have this bill put upon the statute book. There has been no public demand for it that I know of. The hon. gentleman has made his own case, but I have heard of no others who have asked to have this bill enacted. On the contrary, since the hon. gentleman introduced his bill three or four weeks ago I have received very many protests, and I am sure other members of the house have received them also. The hon. member for Vancouver-Burrard (Mr. Hanbury) nods his head; he has received protests. My hon. friend the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Stirling), the British Columbia minister, has received many protests as well. For example, I have received protests from the Vancouver Merchants' Exchange, the Vancouver board of trade, the Halifax board of trade, the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National steamships and from a number of private companies as well, of which I will name four. They include the Anglo-British Columbia Packing Company, Associated Timber Exporters, British Columbia Packers Limited and the Canadian Fishing Company Limited. Those are some I have under my hand.

In view of all these protests, therefore, with all due deference I suggest to my hon. friend that he might well withdraw this bill at this time, and if he and we come back here next year, after having given it further consideration he may desire to introduce it again then. It may be, though it takes a rather long stretch of the imagination, that he will be on the government side of the house at that time; one never can tell what may happen after an election, but I do suggest in all sincerity that the hon. gentleman might withdraw the bill now. I think that would be better than to have us vote it down. I do not think there is any need for that, but if he will not withdraw the bill the government will have to take the position of opposing it.

Mr. D. B. PLUNKETT (Victoria, B.C.): Mr. Speaker, representing as I do a section of the country where there is a large coastal trade this matter has been brought to my attention very forcibly by the business men of that district. I cannot see any advantage to be gained by putting the shipping business under the control of the board of railway commissioners. Are we to educate those commissioners so that they will understand