

The frankest men who came before our committee were the wage-earners on the boats. They said, "We want this Bill to pass." "And why?" they were asked. "Because our boats cannot get rates high enough to enable them to pay us decent wages. We want them to get higher rates so that our wages may be higher." Those men spoke what was in their hearts. There is no use in saying the purpose of this measure is to stabilize rates, but not to raise them. "Stabilization" does not mean prosperity unless it is another word for raising. I know the raising is to be under Government control. That is all right. If there is to be a raising of rates at all it ought to be under Government control. But the control of Government, as far as it is exercised, must be exercised in the protection of the public, not of the individual.

We are told by the honourable senator from Kootenay East (Hon. Mr. King) that there is control of buses and of street railways. There is control of buses by provinces, and of street railways and public utilities generally by municipalities. But what is the purpose of the control? It is universally and uniformly to see that the public is protected. In respect of buses the provinces say: "Within our boundaries there shall be a regular bus service. There is business for it. There shall be one and only one line between this city and that. We cannot have regularity of service at a proper cost unless we give a monopoly to one company."

Hon. Mr. DUFF: Even that is going pretty far.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: That is going pretty far; but, even so, you have to keep your rates down. That is not control for the purpose of lifting the bus companies out of insolvency; it is control to enable the public to get service and to be protected against exorbitant rates. I do not know of any other control we have in this country. I do not know of any other purpose in the control that we have.

Now, can you apply that to the Great Lakes?

Hon. Mr. LYNCH-STANTON: Why not?

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Is anybody complaining of the service?

Hon. Mr. LYNCH-STANTON: The man giving it is.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Yes, the man giving it is, but the purpose of control has never been to help the man who is providing the service. He helps himself, and the shipping people should help themselves.

Now I come to the line of solution. We have been told that there is control on the ocean—that tramp steamers are controlled, that only on our lakes does the wild man still run his course, and that the only purpose is to regulate that territory. There is tramp steamer control, but it is a control developed by the operators themselves. The British Government made certain grants under certain conditions. It said, "You have to see that rates go no higher than this line." The purpose of that control, so far as it was governmental, was to protect the public, not to enable tramp steamers to come out of bankruptcy and make money.

Right Hon. Mr. GRAHAM: It would depend on the size of the grant, would it not?

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: A large grant would help, no doubt, but the control is a maximum control. The authorities do not say, "You have to charge so much." They are not seeking to raise the level of charges. That is not the purpose at all. I know that in the United States a different principle has been introduced. I know the Roosevelt Government has tried here, there, and everywhere, to dictate this, that, or the other thing. England has followed an opposite course. She has entered the shipbuilding field and the iron and steel industry, but in every case she has made the conditions such that the industry itself could work out its own salvation. She has pursued that course with tremendous success. The shipbuilding and the iron and steel industries have been revived. They have been told not that they must make money by charging such and such prices, but that they could co-operate among themselves. "You make your rules and we will see that they are fair to the public. We are not going to see that you make money by reason of our fixing of rates."

I think the whole principle of this Bill is to seek control on the lakes. That is the centre and heart of the measure, and it is wrong and fundamentally unsound. I think every witness before the committee showed that it could not work except to the impediment of traffic. You cannot have any system of superimposed government control to dictate rates where they have to be fixed instantaneously, or when boats shift here or there as different rates prevail. The people interested may agree to some principle among themselves. I say let them agree. The Government may well protect the public not from low rates, but from rates that are too high. That is the function of government, and we already have a measure for that very purpose. These industries have to work out their own