

*Ocean Shipping Rates*

to the member for Red Deer (Mr. Speakman), that even if this contract went to a special committee the government was ready to accept whatever proposal the special committee made.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Is my hon. friend referring to my remarks? I do not think I used the word "accept" at all, I said the government would be prepared to consider any suggestion that might be made by the committee.

Mr. MANION: I will accept the Prime Minister's statement but he went further and said they were ready to deal with any suggestion which the committee might make. I put it to any hon. member in the House if the right hon. gentleman did not go that far.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I did not say that the government would "accept".

Mr. MANION: The other evening in reply to the hon. member for Vancouver Centre (Mr. Stevens) the Prime Minister made the statement:

Mr. Mackenzie King: The agreement will be passed just as it is, it cannot be trimmed up.

Which statement from the Prime Minister are we to accept, the statement made the other day or the statement made to-night?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: If my hon. friend will read the words that occasioned that reply he will see the relevance of it.

Mr. MANION: I do not wish to waste the time of the House, but if the Prime Minister insists I will do so. This is before the reply in question of the Prime Minister.

Mr. Stevens: I rather suspected that—

In reference to some remark by the Prime Minister.

—I rather suspected that the government would be anxious to get this agreement to a private committee away up somewhere so that they could trim it up in order that it might be a little more presentable.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Yes, exactly.

Mr. MANION. I go on to quote:

Mr. Mackenzie King: The agreement will have to pass just as it is. It cannot be trimmed up.

Then a little lower down Mr. Stevens said:

My right hon. friend stated a moment ago that this agreement stands and not a letter of it can be changed.

Mr. Mackenzie King: It does stand.

So it is the case of the gentleman who said "You can pay your money and you can take your choice." We can either take the statement of the Prime Minister to-night in reply to the hon. member for Red Deer, or we can take his statement the other day in reply to the hon. member for Vancouver Centre.

[Mr. Manion.]

Now Mr. Speaker, I am not going to deal with this agreement from the standpoint of a transportation man, nor from the standpoint of a lawyer, nor from the standpoint of a shipper; I am going to try to deal with it in a very brief way from the standpoint of the ordinary man in the street, the man who looks at the agreement just as the ordinary citizen should look at it, and I am going to make whatever brief observations I have to offer from that attitude.

In the first place the thing that strikes me and, I believe, the thing that strikes anybody in looking at this proposition is, that it is either based upon or supported by—we understood at first "based upon" but now they say "supported"—a report of W. T. R. Preston. I do not know Mr. W. T. R. Preston but I do know that very many charges have been made against him of political trickery, if you wish to put it that way. I do know that Mr. W. T. R. Preston is a man who is discredited among ordinary people. That is the feeling of the ordinary man towards W. T. R. Preston; and I find myself asking why this government, representing the people of Canada, should have chosen Mr. W. T. R. Preston, when they had so many respectable outstanding lawyers, so many respectable business men in the Liberal party to choose from. If you look over the report—and I have looked it over and studied it fairly carefully—you will feel that the report is plainly the irresponsible report of an irresponsible man. It is particularly notable for its attacks upon outstanding men in the shipping business, not only in Canada but in Great Britain. It goes so far, Mr. Speaker, as not only to accuse these men of being crooked but to accuse them of being traitors to their country. Because if you read the report you will find that again and again Preston gives evidence—evidence, according to this statement, satisfactory to him—which proves to himself at any rate, that these men are conspiring—I could quote his actual words but I shall not take the time—are conspiring against Britain, are conspiring against Canada, in favour of Germany, in favour of Holland, in favour of the United States, and in favour of practically every other country in the world. Well, I have no brief in any shape, manner or form for the shipping men, either in England or in Canada—I presume they are well able to defend themselves—but I must confess that I believe somewhat in the old British principle that men should be regarded as innocent until they are proven guilty. But Mr. Preston takes the reverse attitude; he believes,