

yet the Government comes along with this Bill which, by destroying competition, would increase lake rates and thereby make that burden even heavier.

It is a matter of history that a rebellion was threatened in Manitoba a good many years ago because railway competition was lacking and high freight rates consequently prevailed. After the Roblin Government came into power the Red River Valley line was built, and competition brought about a decrease in rates. There is no necessity of going further into that history at this time. I refer to it simply to show that rates always increase when there is no free competition. How can any reasonable person get up in this House and vote for a Bill that would destroy competition on the Great Lakes? If you destroy competition you destroy the whole structure under which the transportation business is carried on all over the world.

Let me remind the honourable leader of the Government (Hon. Mr. Dandurand) that Sir Wilfrid Laurier built the Transcontinental Railway, which cost a frightful sum, and said he was going to establish a freight rate of 13 cents per 100 pounds from Armstrong down to Quebec. But what happened? Well, the rates went up to 33 or 34 cents, and the whole force of the Government could not bring them down. Under the present Bill the Government plans to fix freight rates. But no Government could do that. The companies concerned are stronger than any Government. They could say to the Board, "We will carry grain at such a rate and no less." To my mind the Bill is not sensible. So far as I am concerned, as one who lives in the province of Manitoba, I am not going to vote for any measure that would destroy competition with regard to rates for carrying grain down through the Great Lakes.

Hon. W. A. BUCHANAN: Honourable senators, my standpoint in approaching this measure may be different from that of some honourable members who have already spoken. I wonder if opponents of the Bill are not in a state of fear of what may happen. I am thinking of it from another point of view—that what is feared by those who oppose the Bill will not occur. I live in a part of Canada where the people are at present in constant fear that something may happen to a greater extent than it has happened so far. For years now we have had on the Statute Book an Act giving the Board of Railway Commissioners certain control over railroad and express rates. The object of the present Bill is to extend the powers of that body, which would hereafter be known as the Board of Transport Commissioners, to include super-

vision over the rates charged by every form of transportation in Canada. If I am to judge the new Board by the conduct of the old one, I cannot become greatly alarmed by this measure. On the other hand, if I felt that the fears of my honourable colleagues from the West were well grounded, I should be inclined to support their stand.

Regulation would not inevitably lead to higher rates. Is it not possible that without regulation over certain forms of transportation, such as steamships and aeroplanes, there might be a combination of those interests and an increase in rates on the Great Lakes and in the air? This Bill would give us some control over these rates. There would be a Board to which we could appeal if we felt that certain rates were extortionate or unreasonable. That has been the kind of safeguard provided by the Board of Railway Commissioners ever since it has been in existence. The smallest community in Western Canada or in any other part of the country could protest to that body if it considered it was being imposed upon by unjust rates or services.

I certainly should not like to see any measure passed by this Chamber which would result in the imposition of a single cent of additional expense upon the farmers of Western Canada in connection with the movement of their products or the transportation from Eastern Canada of goods which they consume; but I look upon this measure as an attempt to control all forms of transport under the Board of Transport Commissioners, just as the railways have been controlled in the past under the Board of Railway Commissioners.

An insinuation has been made that the Bill is in the interest of the railways. I am not here to speak on behalf of the railways, but I want to relate an incident that occurred in one part of Western Canada, just to show that the railways are giving good service and are able to give it at times when their competitors are not. I think it is only right that this should be said. The southern part of Alberta has experienced this year, from blockaded roads, the worst conditions that have ever been known since that part of the province was settled. The town of Cardston, for instance, with a population of 2,000, was cut off from railroad, truck and mail facilities for nearly ten days. Railroad lines and highways alike were blocked. What did the railway management do? It did not throw up its hands. Half a dozen of the railway's branch lines in that country had been rendered almost useless by competition from trucks during that part of the year when the