

CANADA

House of Commons Debates

OFFICIAL REPORT—REVISED EDITION

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Speaker: HON. THOMAS SIMPSON SPROULE.

Monday, February 23, 1914.

The House met at Three o'clock, the Speaker in the Chair.

REPORTS AND PAPERS.

Report of the Department of the Interior for the year ended March 31, 1913, volume I.—Hon. W. J. Roche.

Regulations for the disposal of petroleum and natural gas rights.—Hon. W. J. Roche.
Grazing Regulations.—Hon. W. J. Roche.

REPRESENTATION IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Hon. ROBERT ROGERS: I beg to move that the special committee to whom was referred Bill No. 62, to readjust the representation in the House of Commons, have leave to report from time to time.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. ROGERS presented the first report of the said committee, recommending that it have leave to sit during the time the House is in session.

On motion of Mr. Rogers, the report was concurred in.

RAILWAY ACT AMENDMENT.

Mr. J. E. ARMSTRONG (East Lambton) moved for to introduce Bill No. 85, to amend the Railway Act. He said: The object of this Bill is to provide that all steamboat companies plying on inland waters shall be under the Railway Commission. As the House is aware, at present only a small portion of the boats on the Great Lakes and inland waters are to-day under the Railway Commission. We have expended tens of millions of dollars on our inland waters in the way of deepening rivers, building docks

and piers, and constructing canals in order that the steamboats plying on these waters may have every advantage. At the present time these steamboat companies are practically free to charge whatever rate or to make whatever traffic arrangements they like, and in my opinion, it is high time they were placed under the Railway Commission. Only last Thursday I heard hon. gentlemen opposite complain of combines on the Great Lakes. By having the steamboats engaged in the carrying trade placed under the Railway Commission, we shall be able to investigate any such combine. Moreover, we protect our inland waters for the purpose of giving our own boats and shipping interests practically all the traffic on these waters, and we should have some control over these boats. Not only will this Bill compel the shipping interests on our inland waters to file their traffic rates, tolls and arrangements, but it will compel any boats coming to any of our ocean ports to file their traffic rates, tolls and arrangements with the Railway Commission. If this Bill is passed, it will materially assist the commission appointed by the Department of Trade and Commerce for the purpose of investigating the ocean freight rates in coming to a definite conclusion as to what is the best thing to do in regard to controlling ocean freight rates. At the present time these boats come from foreign lands, take our produce and carry it away, without any restriction whatever or any question being asked.

It is said that this Bill will materially interfere with the Marine Act, and that it will not be possible for this Parliament to put it into force; but I have consulted some of the best marine lawyers that I could find, and they have assured me that in no way will it interfere with the present Marine Act. The marine law deals only with the safety of navigation and the protection of seamen.