

Are they not the governments of the provinces? They one after another came before the committee and declared they opposed this Bill to the bitter end. There never was a Bill before us—

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: They oppose that clause.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: In respect of motor traffic.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Yes.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Certainly.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: They were defending their jurisdiction.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: They are not private interests. Private interests are opposing because they do not want to come under two jurisdictions. They are already controlled—controlled to death, they complain—and they do not want to have another jurisdiction superimposed. None of us desires to launch a new series of law-suits between the provinces and the Dominion in an attempt to arrogate to ourselves the right to control this little narrow margin of motor traffic.

I pass from that, then, to the main provision of the measure. And it is on account of this main provision that I feel I cannot possibly take the responsibility of voting for the Bill. Honourable members have found much fault with what they think may be the sectional attitude of Western senators. Some rather harsh words have been spoken about the alleged selfishness of the Prairie West as manifested now in respect of this Bill. Well, it is perfectly proper to keep this in mind, that the Bill—the child, as it was described by my honourable friend to the right (Hon. Mr. Beaubien)—after it had been trimmed and painted and had undergone amputation, had no abhorrent features except from the point of view of honourable members from the Prairie West. Honourable senators from the Maritime Provinces cannot look with horror upon its face, because it concerns them no longer.

Hon. Mr. DUFF: They would be very selfish if they took that stand. I am opposed to it.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: I think they would. Honourable members from British Columbia, including the honourable senator from Kootenay East (Hon. Mr. King), could not see any great deformity in the measure from the standpoint of British Columbia. It does not apply to their coastwise traffic, or to traffic from their coast through the Panama canal right into the heart of the Dominion. The only thing it applies to is traffic to and from the Prairie West, and consequently we

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN.

have to listen with sympathy and give careful consideration to the protests of honourable members from the Prairie West against the measure. They say the ultimate design and purpose of the measure is to raise rates on the Great Lakes, and what they fear chiefly is the raising of rates on their grain. Members in the Maritime Provinces speak, and properly so, about their right to enter the Central Provinces with their goods as the Magna Charta of their country, and they have fought gallantly, persistently and successfully from the birth of this Dominion to this hour to stand by that right. The West has a similar feeling. The very Magna Charta of the West is the right of shipment on these lakes under terms of unrestrained competition. There is no difference of opinion about that. If anybody expects to hear a breath of sympathy from the Prairie West with respect to this measure, he is going to suffer as severe a disappointment as he ever endured. I have had something to do with Western opinion and know how the West feels, and so far as it is the duty of a Western member to represent Western opinion he is bound to say the West is against the Bill almost to a man. Someone has said—he may be right even though the West is against it—that perhaps their apprehensions are wrong; that the ultimate result of the measure will not mean an elevation of rates. I think the Government would have done better if it had frankly said the purpose of the Bill was to restore order instead of chaos, or solvency instead of bankruptcy in the highly competitive business of shipping on the Great Lakes. That undoubtedly is the purpose of the Bill. It has no other. It can have no other. Nobody is saying the service is not good enough. Nobody is complaining that he cannot ship his grain. It is not the public that wants this measure. But the lake shippers say: "We have been in bankruptcy for years, we have tried to come to terms of co-operation, but cannot do it; so now we come to the doors of Parliament"—where they did not come before. "For Heaven's sake help us. Come in and fix rates so that we may bring order out of chaos and turn the darkness of bankruptcy into the sunlight of solvency." That cannot be done except by an average raising of rates. Maybe rates will not be raised in July of this year or July of next year; maybe the average increase on the whole would be very little, for there is very little margin between success and failure in any business; but the purpose of the Bill cannot be effected except by the raising of rates.