

commission in Ottawa, a thousand or more miles away from the scene? I object to that kind of thing.

I can understand, honourable senators, that the Government may have some right to regulate rates in the case of ships receiving Government subsidies. For instance, with respect to steamers plying between Vancouver and Japan, or between Halifax and South Africa, or even coastal steamers running between Yarmouth and Saint John, or between Halifax and Sherbrooke, or Halifax and Cape Breton, I can see that where a subsidy is being paid the Government may have the right to say, "We do not want you to charge too much to the people who are using this service, and so that we may be sure of what you are charging you must file with a government department a schedule of your rates." But, honourable senators, where a private individual builds or operates ships, or invests money in ships, why should the Government or any government commission have power to say what rates that individual shall charge for transporting goods? Why should the ship owner be unable to make an arrangement with a shipper unless he has first got approval from Ottawa? Suppose the honourable senator from Cardigan (Hon. Mr. Macdonald) has 6,000 bags of potatoes that he wants to ship from Montague, Prince Edward Island, to Halifax, and he sends me a telegram offering to pay a rate of 60 cents a bag. I reply and say I will do it for 65 cents, and after some dickering we agree upon 62½ cents. Well, if this Bill passes, before we could make a definite bargain we should have to telegraph to Ottawa to see if the Board of Transport Commissioners were satisfied. The thing is ridiculous, honourable senators, and I say that we should be very careful before we interfere in such a way with the interests of private individuals in this country.

I have already said that I am not objecting at the moment to the Bill, because I have not had an opportunity of studying it. But I want to urge upon honourable senators my view that the less interference we have with private business in this country the better it will be. We have gone too far already; there is entirely too much paternalism. You can hardly move or turn around now without having to get a licence from a federal or provincial board or a municipal council. The sooner we put a stop to that sort of thing the better it will be for us all.

Right Hon. GEORGE P. GRAHAM: Honourable senators, I am not going to make a speech, for I am not sure just what I may have to say until I digest this Bill a little

more carefully. I have had some experience in endeavouring to control shipping rates. At one time I went to Great Britain in an attempt to fortify myself with information, when some people were thinking, quite seriously, that we could come to an arrangement with the Motherland for controlling ocean rates. I forget just now the exact argument of those people, but it was to the effect that the rates charged with respect to any ship landing in Canada could be regulated through a licence system. Well, I found that point of view was not received sympathetically by the British Government or ship owners.

Hon. Mr. DUFF: Hear, hear.

Right Hon. Mr. GRAHAM: I went further. I discussed the matter with some of our American friends, and I received the impression that perhaps they might get the better of us on certain matters. So I came away thinking that unless we could safeguard ourselves in that direction we were not going to get very far.

During my term of office as Minister of Railways our Board of Railway Commissioners were proposing, or perhaps had proposed to them, a union of themselves with the Interstate Commerce Commission for the purpose of dealing with international traffic. A discussion of interested parties, particularly of transportation men and members of the Railway Board, finally took place in my bedroom, where I was confined. That day I was not in very good humour, and perhaps I was seeing things red. Anyway, the result of it all was that no such arrangement was made. It is not my intention to tell this House why no arrangement was made, but I may say I concluded that what was proposed would not be beneficial to Canadian producers or transportation companies.

As my honourable friend from Lunenburg (Hon. Mr. Duff) says, this is a very important Bill. It goes deeper than we perhaps think it does, and has ramifications that may not have been brought to our attention, or possibly the attention of the department. On the St. Lawrence, for instance, we have many small craft, such as motor-boats, and it is necessary in a particular locality to allow them to do transport business. I am wondering how this Bill would affect them. Being chairman of the committee to which the Bill is to be referred, of course I am non-committal. I want to hear the arguments pro and con before I come to a conclusion. It is a measure of great possibilities for good, and we must be careful not to make a misstep. I do not suppose the committee will summon anybody before it, but no doubt it