

ment will be prepared to meet his views, and if he wants we can send the bill right away, to-night.

Mr. SPEAKMAN: I am suggesting that this committee should be given an opportunity to receive all the information necessary—

Mr. LAPOINTE: That is the third point; but what is the first?

Mr. SPEAKMAN: I say that the committee should receive all the information necessary to come to a satisfactory conclusion on the subject; that it should have an opportunity to examine into the absolute authenticity and accuracy of the report that is before us as well as of others, in order to ascertain whether or not exorbitant profits have been made; that it should have an opportunity to consider the attitude displayed by the British parliament and such action as may be adopted by the other dominions;—in short, that it should have an opportunity to take all these things into careful consideration in deciding the best steps to be followed. And after all this was done the committee might come to the conclusion that some other method was better than the one now proposed, and might suggest it. That is what I meant when I made the first statement. If the committee is given, as far as it can be given, a free hand to suggest the alternatives which have been asked for and which I am not prepared to suggest, not having the information before me that is essential if one is to suggest anything reasonable; if the committee, I say, is given an opportunity to study the question thoroughly and make suggestions, even though they take some other form than the present, then I should say that this was a real test of the good faith of the government. I do not say it would be necessarily a test of the good faith of the government as applied to this particular agreement, but of the good faith of the government in endeavouring to settle the question on the best possible basis, a basis which is not political, which has nothing to do with subsidies to one man or another, which has nothing to do with friends or with favouritism, but a basis that will appeal to the business sense of the country as one calculated most effectively to reduce the cost of ocean transportation.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Has the hon. member any other method to suggest than first submitting this resolution to the House? Is there any other way of bringing the matter before parliament than by introducing a resolution?

Mr. SPEAKMAN: I have no quarrel with the government on the score of introducing this resolution, if it acts on a suggestion of one of its members that the matter be referred to a committee in the form of a bill, without the House being asked to commit itself to the principle of that bill. That is a different situation.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: My hon. friend knows that bills before going to committees pass a second reading. So far as this bill is concerned, the principle is the desirability of controlling ocean rates, and that is all that the House commits itself to on the second reading. It commits itself to the desirability of controlling ocean rates, subject to the approval of parliament. When the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Low) introduced his resolution, he stated the position of the government, that as soon as the second reading of the bill was over, the government intended to refer the bill to a committee so that it might consider and discuss whether or not the proposed contract was acceptable. I think that makes the position of the government clear. I want to be perfectly fair with my hon. friend. I do not want him later, when the second reading comes along, to say that the government has broken faith. I desire to point out just this, that the government is very anxious to have the committee investigate the agreement, and it is taking the one step it thinks necessary to arrive at that committee stage as soon as possible.

Mr. SPEAKMAN: If I understand aright the statement made by the Prime Minister, the principle to which the government adhere and by which they stand or fall is the principle of reducing the cost of ocean transportation by any method which will be proved to be the best method.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I would use the word "control".

Mr. SPEAKMAN: Or control. The principle to which they are committed and by which they must stand or fall is not the principle embodied in the agreement itself, but rather the principle contained in the preamble to the agreement which states that it is necessary or proper to reduce rates.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The government has made it perfectly plain, for example, to Sir William Petersen that the contract does not go into force unless it is approved by parliament. The government might have drafted a contract and said: We will stand or fall by this contract passing, because we have pledged ourselves that it is going to pass; but that is precisely the course which we did not