

*Ocean Shipping Rates*

the matter is brought before the committee and the committee has the fullest opportunity of considering it from all angles, there will be time enough then to consider whether or not the recommendations of the committee may be such as both parties could accept.

Mr. SPEAKMAN: As I see the situation, then, the government will stand or fall by this agreement but they will be prepared, with the consent of the other party, to modify it upon the basis of such recommendations as may be submitted by the committee. May I say this, that the good faith of the government in this matter will be tested, first, by their willingness to refer this matter to the committee before a definite pronouncement is made in the House and before the House commits itself to the contract.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The House cannot commit itself to the contract until all three readings have gone through. When the minister brings in the bill, it will be referred, immediately after its second reading, to a committee which will discuss it before it is brought into the House.

Mr. SPEAKMAN: A bill after it has had its second reading is accepted in principle; the principle of the bill is accepted when the House agrees to its second reading. So that parliament, having accepted the principle of the bill in this instance, the bill itself could not be subject to any severe modifications on the part of a special committee.

Mr. GRAHAM: I would point this out to the hon. gentleman. A railway bill, for example, gets its second reading and is referred to a committee. That committee has the power, and often exercises it, to throw the bill out altogether.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Does the minister know of any railway bill or of any other bill embodying a contract, which a government has made, which has ever been altered upon a recommendation of any committee? Does he know of anything of that kind in the history of any parliament?

Mr. GRAHAM: I have known railway bills to be introduced into this House—

Mr. MEIGHEN: That is not the point.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is the point, exactly. My hon. friend is afraid because he knows that I have him absolutely in a box. A railway bill gets its second reading and is referred to a committee and time and time again the committee has made changes in such measures.

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

Mr. MEIGHEN: I did not say to the contrary.

Mr. GRAHAM: It can make changes in a bill, and only when a bill gets its third reading is it a contract with the parliament of Canada; not before.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Does the minister think he has answered my question?

Mr. GRAHAM: Certainly; my hon. friend does not know what he is trying to get at.

Mr. SPEAKMAN: If this debate on the side is concluded I shall proceed. I simply wish to emphasize again the fact that the good faith of the government will be tested, first, by their willingness to submit the bill to a committee before this House necessarily endorses the main principle of the agreement.

Mr. MARTELL: Would not the principle of the bill be approved by the House, after which the bill itself would go to the committee for the purpose probably of fixing the terms based on that principle?

Mr. SPEAKMAN: In the second place, the good faith of the government in this matter will be shown by the facilities which they afford the committee to obtain all the information necessary to deal with the subject. And thirdly, the good faith of the government will be evidenced by their readiness to consider, and consider favourably, the suggestions advanced by that committee in the light of such information as it has received and after adequate discussion of the whole matter.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Would the hon. member repeat what he defined as the first test of the good faith of the government? I did not understand it.

Mr. SPEAKMAN: Let me point out for the information of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe) just what the position is of a good many members in this House on this question, at least as I see it. We are satisfied, many of us, that through the efforts of a combine, together with natural causes, rates have increased beyond the normal and satisfactory point. Further, we are satisfied that some method must be devised of dealing with the situation and settling it. But many of us are not satisfied that this particular method which is proposed is the best that could be evolved.

Mr. LAPOINTE: The hon. member says that the good faith of the government will be tested by sending this bill to a special committee, without asking the House to commit itself to the principle. What does the hon. gentleman suggest? I am sure the govern-