

to begin with to refer it to a special committee. There were a number of very important interests affected by the Bill, and as a matter of courtesy to them, in order that they might be heard, as explained by the hon. gentleman from Ottawa, the Bill was sent to the Committee on Banking and Commerce for the purpose of hearing those objections. The committee undertook to frame clauses that in a degree met some of the objections, and that is the Bill we have here. The rule which my hon. friend has read does not apply to public Bills. It was never contemplated.

Hon. Mr. LANDRY—Yes, we have a rule which says that a public Bill may be referred to a committee.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—A public Bill?

Hon. Mr. LANDRY—Yes.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—It is a great pity, because the Bill was two months before that committee. They were dealing with it before the adjournment which was made in order to give the parties who had to communicate with London, ample time, and a large amount of labour was devoted by the committee to a consideration of the Bill and very important changes were made to meet the objections of those who opposed it.

Hon. Mr. LANDRY—I do not want to retard the Bill, but I want to point out the irregularity of the proceeding, so that we may avoid it in the future. I will not make any objection at all, but will simply call attention to the facts.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—I do not press any objection to the Bill. I stated when I rose a short time ago that I only desired to point out the irregularity. I am just as anxious as the hon. gentleman that the Bill should become law. I understood the hon. gentleman from Ottawa to say it was an unusual thing to send such a Bill to this committee. It is often done. I have known government Bills, on which it has been pointed out that there was diversity of opinion, and that certain interests were affected, and instead of referring them to a Committee of the Whole House, they were sent to a

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special committee for consideration, and that special committee reported to the House. The rules provide how it shall be done.

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT—The hon. gentleman misunderstood me. I said the usual procedure had been departed from in this case, because being a government Bill it would naturally be sent to a Committee of the Whole.

The motion was agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole on the Bill.

(In the Committee).

Hon. Mr. CAMPBELL—As the Secretary of State has pointed out, this Bill has been before the committee since the 16th of March, and a good many changes were there made in it. It was very strongly opposed by the shipping interests of the country, but at the suggestion of the Chairman of the Committee, after two or three clauses had been passed, a conference was held with the representatives of all the shipping interests—a meeting between the promoters of the Bill and those who were opposed to it, and as a result, clauses were gone over one by one, and all practically agreed upon. There were one or two or three new clauses added, which the interests of the shippers suggested, and I may say that they were all unanimously adopted.

On clause 4,

4. Where any bill of lading or document contains any clause, covenant or agreement whereby—

(a) the owner, charterer, master, or agent of any ship, or the ship itself, is relieved from liability for loss or damage to goods arising from negligence, fault or failure in the proper loading, stowage, custody, care or delivery of goods received by them or any of them to be carried in or by the ship; or

(b) any obligations of the owner or charterer of any ship to exercise due diligence to properly man, equip and supply the ship, and make and keep the ship seaworthy, and make and keep the ship's hold, refrigerating and cool chambers, and all other parts of the ship in which goods are carried, fit and safe for their reception, carriage and preservation, are in any wise lessened, weakened or avoided; or

(c) the obligations of the master, officers, agents, or servants of any ship to carefully handle and stow goods, and to care for, preserve and properly deliver them, are in any wise lessened, weakened or avoided;