

he did not have this Canadian competition and the restrictions such as it is proposed to put on by this Bill are going to work in my opinion to the detriment of the small owner, and for the benefit of the large owner. The small man with two or three boats, with a poorer service, is not going to get the business from the larger corporations with an every day service, if he is working on the same rate. I want to make that perfectly plain, because I am representing one of the smaller owners, and I believe the ultimate effect of this thing will be to put the business in fewer hands, with an advancement in freight rates.

A MEMBER.—Is there a diversity of rates as between the owners from day to day?

Mr. HENDERSON.—Absolutely there is, and the Canadian owners never had any consultations as to rates. I might go to Mr. Wright, for example, some day and get his private opinion. He might tell me what he is asking, and I might tell him what I was asking.

Mr. MACLEAN, M.P.—You have not any system of interchange of rates?

Mr. HENDERSON.—No. If I happen to meet Mr. Wright I might talk with him. I never wrote to any other owner and asked him what rates he was asking. I make my own rates and I get my information from the shipper not from the other vessel owners. The shipper will come and tell me that so-and-so is taking tonnage at such a rate. If I want the business I have to conform to the rate.

Mr. MACLEAN, M.P.—What is the uproar in the country against the sudden, rapid and great increase in inland transportation rates, in the last two or three years?

Mr. HENDERSON.—I do not think there is any. I have not heard any uproar. I was going to ask who it is that is behind this, or what interests are behind it. I have heard the manufacturers express the opinion that they would be sorry to see the boats put under any commission, that they want the flexibility of rates as they exist to-day, and the cheaper rates the boats are giving. I have heard some talk from the Millers' Association about rates and one thing and another. But I have not heard the millers objecting to the lake freights they are paying, and I have not heard anybody else.

Mr. MACLEAN, M.P.—Was not that the finding of the Commission?

Mr. HENDERSON.—There was a steamboat merger last year which came to a head, I think, last December, but that has not resulted in higher rates. A year ago we were getting 7 cents from the head of the lakes to Montreal; to-day we are getting 4½ cents a bushel. That does not look like increasing the rates. We cannot get them up, because the market conditions will not allow them. We would like to make more money—I would like to make more money, but cannot do it. Some gentlemen lose sight of an important fact. They look at one big steamboat merger. The Canada Steamship Lines, Ltd., and that merger has had a lot of free advertising in the papers. I wish I could get such advertising, but I cannot. There seems to be an opinion that they are the only big company doing business on the lakes.

Mr. ARMSTRONG, (Chairman).—How many Canadian Companies are there doing business on the Great Lakes?

Mr. HENDERSON.—There are at least a dozen.

Mr. KING.—There are twenty or twenty-five in the grain trade.

Mr. HENDERSON.—Canada Steamships is a merger of five or six of our individual companies.

Senator WATSON.—What percentage of the tonnage, about?

Mr. HENDERSON.—I think they have less than 50 per cent of the grain tonnage.

Mr. BURKE.—Less than 40 per cent.

Mr. HENDERSON.—I felt that I could do my business without reference to the Canada Steamship Company. I had an idea that the Canada Steamships would put up rates, but instead of firming up rates, the rates, if you will excuse the expression, have gone to blazes. We are not making the money this year that we made last year.