

coastwise shipping from the operations of the Bill, and we have eliminated maritime province shipping.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Coastwise shipping on the oceans.

Hon. Mr. GRIESBACH: Yes. We know that the Bill, so far as it applies to road transport, trenches on the rights and prerogatives of the provinces; that we can apply it only to that portion of the traffic which is either interprovincial or provincial and foreign—and that is only 1.8 per cent of the total. All that is retained in the Bill for the purpose of assisting the railways is the regulation of lake traffic; and in explaining this situation the Minister made the simple statement that the Bill was designed to cure a situation which had arisen in lake traffic, namely, that the whole system of shipping on the lakes was bankrupt and the Bill proposed to stabilize rates. Of course we ask ourselves at once how lake shipping which is bankrupt can be benefited in any other way than by an increase of rates. Then we ask who it is that uses this form of transport, in the main, and is going to pay these increased rates. That question brings us to the grain trade of Western Canada. The long and the short of it is that we are asked to attempt to assist our Canadian railways by laying what is in effect a tax upon one particular industry, namely, the grain producing industry of Western Canada.

I do not suppose there ever was a bill before the Committee on Railways, Telegraphs and Harbours which had such a mass of evidence adduced against it. We find that the boards of trade of the Maritime Provinces were against the Bill. I take it that they have now been satisfied. The provinces of Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan appeared by counsel and opposed that portion of the Bill which applies to the roads. I think it is safe to say that, except a few statements by the railways themselves and perhaps one or two shipping concerns, the whole of the evidence presented was against the Bill.

Some discussion has occurred as to the duty of the Senate with respect to a bill of this sort, a Government measure introduced in the Senate, and as to whether we should dispose of it here or pass it on to the other House. It seems to me that our duty with respect to this proposed legislation is precisely the same as in the case of any other bill. In choosing to introduce in this House the Government believed the Bill would receive a fair hearing and all interested parties would have an opportunity of presenting their

views. That fair hearing has taken place, and anybody who wanted to give evidence has had an opportunity of doing so. The great mass of the evidence given was against the proposed measure. The Bill was amended in the most outstanding particulars with the knowledge and consent of the Minister, and it has been further amended to-day. It bears little resemblance to the one first introduced. The Minister himself said the legislation was experimental; that a certain situation existed which it was desirable to remedy, and that there should be some attempt to make a start. I have come to the conclusion that this is not a good start.

The Bill as originally drawn disclosed a lack of knowledge and information. As an evidence of this I would point to the willingness of the Minister to consent to the various amendments that came before him. To-day the Bill consists of virtually nothing but regulations respecting lake shipping and agreed rates. The only evidence brought before the committee as to the value of agreed rates was that portion in which it was stated that in England the outstanding example of agreed rates was contained in an agreement entered into between the Woolworth Company and certain railways, by which the goods of the company were to be carried for 4 per cent of the annual turnover. At once we became aware of the possibility that if agreed rates should come into force in Canada there might be a tremendous discrimination against smaller concerns for the benefit of the larger chain establishments.

Except for the control of lake shipping and agreed rates, the Bill as it originally came before us has almost disappeared. Admitting that something should be done, if possible, to assist our railways, I am inclined to the view that they can be assisted or their situation improved only by the practice of economies within the railroad systems themselves, respecting new methods and the like. So far as the matter of agreed rates is concerned, I think the situation is fraught with great danger.

I think this House would be well advised to stand this Bill over, either by way of the six-months hoist or by defeating it, in order to permit the situation to develop and information to accumulate, particularly with regard to the Bill now before the United States Congress which aims to do much the same thing under very different conditions. A year hence we may know much more about the situation than we know to-day.

I am quite satisfied that I must vote against this Bill for this reason, if for no other, that it seeks to improve the situation of the