

more, for the 15,000,000 bushels they handled than the conference got for handling the 30,000,000 bushels which they handled.

Mr. MARTELL: If by this agreement the government is to pay only for services performed, that is, if the services have to be performed before the government pays anything, how can the government be mulcted in damages by an action at law?

Mr. MANION: That is a legal question and I do not wish to get involved in legal questions. I am not a lawyer. My hon. friend is a lawyer and he can make a speech later on and argue as he chooses. I have given the interpretation as it was given to me by three eminent lawyers.

Mr. MARTELL: I was asking my hon. friend only for information.

Mr. MANION: I do not mean to be offensive towards my hon. friend, but he will pardon me if I go on with my argument. We all take the attitude that a fair day's work ought to be given for a fair day's pay, or, putting it the other way, that a fair day's pay ought to be given for a fair day's work. Exactly the same thing should be true in regard to capital and labour. One is about as important as the other. You cannot very well develop a country just by labour or just by capital. You need both capital and labour. Therefore you should give a fair return to capital. Yet, practically all these steamship lines, in their statements which have been placed in the hands of every hon. member, claim that within the last few years they have been hardly holding their own, or they have been losing. In the face of that, we are out to cut down the rates. I have a statement here in which they state that three or four of the conference lines running out of Montreal have offered—and the government will deny it if they do not agree with this statement—to permit this government to send any reputable corporation such as Price, Waterhouse and Company, or any other reputable accounting firm, to examine their books in order to see exactly how they have been getting along during the last few years, because they claim that their net earnings have been less under the high rates now prevailing than they were under the comparatively low rates of 1913. In addition to this, it is stated that there are to-day six or eight million tons of shipping tied up for lack of business, and much of that tonnage is made up of tramp ships. Well now, if these were only conference ships the retort might be made that they were being kept idle in order that higher rates might be

charged on the ships remaining in commission. But, if the shipping business is such a paying proposition to-day, why do not those tramp ships engage in the business and reap some of the rich profits? It is also stated on the authority of Lloyds that there is to-day fifteen million more tons of shipping in the world than in 1913. Yet under this contract the government is asking Sir William Petersen to still further increase the surplus shipping for which there is no business. This lack of cargoes is one of the reasons why the Canadian Government Merchant Marine is operating at a deficit every year; it cannot get business on a paying basis.

Another point I wish to touch upon very briefly, and I wish to draw it particularly to the attention of hon. members from Montreal, is the danger, which I should like some of them to look into, of American traffic which is now going through the port of Montreal being diverted to United States ports if the Canadian government, by subsidizing certain shipping companies, interferes with shipping from Montreal. I do not wish to elaborate this statement, which I have had from good authority, but in such a way that I do not think I have any right to discuss it further at the moment.

In his report Mr. Preston quotes individuals for the most part, he does not quote groups at all. Since his report came out we have had statements from one group at least, the Canadian Council of Agriculture, that it is opposed to the whole proposition as it stands to-day. We have also had an editorial in the Grain Growers Guide quoted in the eastern papers to the effect that the Guide is not enamoured of the proposition.

If I had my way, Mr. Speaker, I would move an amendment that the resolution be taken up this day three weeks, which would bring it forward on April 1, because I think it is one of the best jokes the government has ever put over on the people. This government has put over quite a number of jokes. For instance, the hon. Minister of Labour (Mr. Murdock) had his famous joke that I have already referred to about combines, trusts and mergers, which he threatened to wipe out as soon as he got into power. Of course, he had to have his little joke. The hon. Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Motherwell) who gave us his fine vaudeville entertainment to-night, told the people of the west that if elected he would come down here and have the Chairman of the Board of Railway Commissioners wiped off the map. That was one of his little jokes. And we have had a number of others. For example, the Prime Minister put a good