

Railway Act—Traffic by Water

circular the railways were instructed not to bother filing their records. It was never put into effect.

Mr. NEILL: The act was revised in 1919; was there any circular after that year?

Mr. MANION: It was never in effect since 1911.

Mr. NEILL: This is the position. We pass an act in 1904—

Mr. MANION: 1906.

Mr. NEILL: 1906—and the minister states it did not come into effect until a circular was issued. But no such condition is mentioned in the act. We know what the routine must be. On certain occasions we say that a measure shall come into effect, or that certain sections shall become effective—as in the shipping bill—after proclamation by order of the governor in council; but they do not come into effect because of a circular. However, we are told by the minister that the board of railway commissioners issued a circular, and that later on they got cold feet and issued another circular ending the matter. This feature seems to me preposterous. The circular of beloved memory was issued in March, 1911. The act was revised in 1918 or 1919—I shall not pledge myself as to the exact year, but I know it was about that time. Was the revised statute again killed by this dead and gone circular which had been issued seven years before? If so it would seem a most extraordinary position. I should think the matter ought to be referred to the railway committee so that that phase of the matter could be investigated. In fact, the appointment of a special committee would be justified to find out whether or not circulars are running this country. We have heard a great deal about government by order in council, but here is an act passed twenty-nine years ago and revised from time to time which is alleged to be non-operative because of a circular issued by the board of railway commissioners.

The minister makes the suggestion that shipping not owned by the railways might be brought under control. Certainly; that is the object of the bill. I do not believe my record will indicate that I have been an advocate of vested interests in railway companies, but if it is right and proper that a steamship owned by a railway company should be under the control of this act, is there any reason why a shipping company which does not happen to be owned by a railway company should not be governed by

[Mr. Manion.]

it? If it is right and proper that the ships owned by a railway company should have control exercised over their rates, their itinerary, and so on, is it unfair to think that the shipping owned by shipping companies which do not happen to be connected with railways should be subject to the same regulations?

The minister undermined his own argument, because after proving that it would be utterly impossible to enforce such a law in any way, shape or form he went on to say that a great deal of shipping on the Pacific coast is under such control now because any boat subsidized by the government in any way is subject to the rules and regulations of the Department of Trade and Commerce. Well, is it all right to have rates, itinerary, ports of call and so on under the supervision of the Department of Trade and Commerce and all wrong to be under the control exercised by the board of railway commissioners?

Mr. MANION: The Department of Trade and Commerce subsidized them and has some right to call the tune.

Mr. NEILL: Yes, and because they are subsidized I propose they should be placed under the same board which controls the boats owned by the railway companies, a board accustomed to doing that type of work. I would say the Department of Trade and Commerce could hardly be considered to be expert in the control of traffic. Most of the companies on the Pacific coast are subsidized by the government.

Mr. MANION: A great many of them are not.

Mr. NEILL: I differ from the minister on that point, so far as the Pacific coast is concerned. I do not know about the Atlantic coast. In a naive and almost pathetic manner he held out the hope that perhaps conditions would be more favourable next year for the passage of this bill.

Mr. MANION: No, for the consideration of it.

Mr. NEILL: I certainly hope they will be.

Motion (Mr. Neill) negatived on division.

DOMINION ELECTIONS ACT

ABSENTEE BALLOT FOR MEN IN UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF CAMPS

The house resumed from Tuesday, February 19, consideration of the motion of Mr. MacInnis for the second reading of Bill No. 16, to amend the Dominion Elections Act, 1934.