

through with the committee stage. As a matter of fact the situation is so bad that the government is prepared to take chances on getting results with this remedy. Something must be done; everyone is agreed on that. People have been talking around the question for years and years and getting nowhere. Now we have a concrete proposal before the House, and like any other legislation it has to go through the various readings before it is referred to a committee. We are making no difference in this respect. There will be the first and second readings of the resolution, the first and second readings of the bill based upon the resolution, and then, in order to give everybody the fullest possible opportunity to get at the bottom of the whole subject in the clear light of open day we propose to have the matter referred to a special committee where evidence can be heard and all information brought out. This is no new method; it is done on many occasions every year. Nearly all my bills go, not to a special committee, but to the regular standing committee on Agriculture and Colonization, and the same applies to railway bills.

Let me take up some of the attacks that have been made upon the resolution. It is said that the best form of defence is attack. Well, I wish to refer, not in too aggressive a way, to some of the attacks made by the opposition on this resolution. We will take them in the order in which they have been made by hon. gentlemen who have spoken.

The hon. member for Vancouver-Centre (Mr. Stevens) was disposed to admit there was an arrangement, there was a conference. What does "conference" mean? A getting together, an arranging of things quite comfortably and satisfactorily to the parties concerned. But somehow or other my hon. friend thought it was not a very vicious thing. Then after that there followed what I thought was a very vicious attack on Mr. Preston, as if he were on trial. Mr. Preston was delegated to inquire into this matter. This House made an inquiry into it two years ago, and the report of the House committee and that of Mr. Preston are very much alike. But for some reason the hon. member (Mr. Stevens) does not like Mr. Preston, and he confined most of his remarks to him rather than to his report. What did he say of Mr. Preston? He was narrow; he was prejudiced; he was jaundiced, and there were a lot of other adjectival appellations that I have forgotten. Anyway, according to my hon. friend he was everything but the right thing. But do you not think that if the report of Mr. Preston, a man

of standing and a very great deal of ability, had any really serious defects my hon. friend would have put his finger upon them? I read my hon. friend's remarks very carefully—I did not trust to my ears alone—but I could not find where he put his finger on anything. He did say that Mr. Preston was a very unreliable man to get a report from, but that is a matter of opinion. Mr. Preston's statements have been assailed also by anonymous attacks, attacks appearing in the Ottawa newspapers in the form of advertisements—at least, they were not signed by anybody. These were not on the editorial page, not even on the front editorial page—if there is such a thing, and not even in the news columns, for which responsibility is sometimes taken to some extent by the editors. These anonymous attacks, plus those of the hon. member for Vancouver Centre are the only direct attacks that I have heard against Mr. Preston's report. Now, let us see what else there is.

My hon. friend says we need return cargoes, but he has done the very best he could to stop return cargoes by opposing the British preference. Well, we cannot get it both ways; you cannot vote against the British preference and increased inter-imperial trade and then complain about the lack of return cargoes.

Then, the hon. member interrupts my hon. colleague—Mr. Low—when he is in the midst of his very excellent address, and rather exultingly says: "Well, there are four things that are not under the combine, wheat, sugar, cattle and flour." Let me see what he did say, because it is quite interesting:

May I say to my hon. friends who are seriously interested in arriving at some proper solution of this problem, that wheat, flour, sugar and cattle have never been under the conference rates? They are not controlled by this alleged combine at all. They are excluded from it and are free from these rates.

That is an interruption by the hon. member for Vancouver Centre.

Mr. BOYS: Will the minister kindly inform the House if that statement which he characterizes as an interruption is a correct statement?

Mr. MOTHERWELL: Well, we may take it as a correct one, but it will be all the worse for my hon. friend if we take it that way.

Mr. BOYS: Will the minister permit—

Mr. MOTHERWELL: I would say, however, that it was not a correct statement, it was a bluff.

Mr. BOYS: I may tell the minister that I am not bluffing now, and if he will permit me I want to put the question; if not, I will