

leased wharfs will be the same as under these general regulations. Fear was expressed also that the lessee would take advantage of private parties by preventing others having access to the wharf. There may be something in that objection, but I thought it could be met by ordering that the lessee shall not have the right to interfere with the public use of the wharf by any other company. In such cases, the wharfinger will have charge, and will decide how the wharf is to be used. On a previous occasion I explained the general object I have in view. The object is, where a wharf is used by only one company, to lease the wharf and force the company to take charge and make the ordinary repairs, thus relieving the government of a very great expense. For, of course, in many cases, we cannot make these repairs except at heavy cost, while those who lease and use the wharf might be able to keep the work in good repair at comparatively little expense. In the second section of the Bill, provision is made for the regulation of rates. I mentioned on a former occasion the difficulties we find in collecting these wharfage rates. The charges are very small. On referring to the regulations I find that the charges include, for instance, one cent per barrel for apples, two cents for 100 pounds of bacon, and so on. The wharfinger experiences great difficulty in collecting these rates. But by commuting the rates with the company by a lease under which they would give us a certain amount of money for the use of the wharf, we shall get a revenue while avoiding the heavy aggregate expense of these minor repairs.

Mr. SPROULE. The lessee, I presume, would charge the public the same rates that are laid down in the regulations?

Mr. BRODEUR. Yes. But the wharfage will be charged in the transportation rates. As it is to-day, the company charges a certain amount for transportation, and the wharfinger is supposed to collect the government fees for wharfage. It can readily be understood that it was very difficult to collect these small sums of five, or ten or fifteen cents, and therefore I think the method proposed under this Bill will be a great advantage.

Mr. SPROULE. The wharfinger will be nominated by the government?

Mr. BRODEUR. Yes.

Mr. FOSTER. Who will pay the wharfinger after you have leased the wharf?

Mr. BRODEUR. He is generally paid 25 per cent of the revenues of the wharf. We can pay him 25 per cent of the amount agreed upon with the lessee.

Mr. FOSTER. I am afraid the policy outlined is liable to great difficulty in the carrying out. The minister is going to avoid giving the lease at too cheap a rate by putting the lease up to competition. But, according to another part of his remarks he will not lease where there is more than one company using the wharf. If there is only one company, there will be only one tenderer and a public call for tenders, while nominally a protection, will be, in reality, of no advantage. I understand that it is not the policy to make any lease or arrangement where more than one company use the same wharf. But should a lease be granted under such conditions, I can understand that there would be constant cause for grievance. Suppose you have a wharf at which half a dozen companies are doing business; each of these concerns is quite willing to do business with the government, because the government is not a competitor with any of them and all are treated alike under the regulations. But will they find it equally pleasant to do business on a wharf where one company, and that a competitor, holds a lease, and, to a large extent has charge? I do not see that it is going to work out well. The principle of a public wharf is that it should be for the benefit of the public; and if you are going to make an arrangement by which one company or one set of persons have charge of a wharf and its revenues and everything else is to go to them, it is impossible to do that without producing a great deal of trouble and dissatisfaction. The minister urges that he does this because the wharfs can be kept in repair by these shipping companies at a much cheaper rate than the government can do it. That is an admission which the government ought to be in a position to minimize very much. If the government carries out this business on a business method, it ought to be able to repair wharfs nearly as cheaply as a company could. Then again there ought not to be any wharf built by the government that is not a public wharf where the people surrounding it have a right to go and come. You are putting them all under tutelage and supervision, and, to a certain extent, within the power of some one who owns the wharf by lease, or who rents it, and is the boss of it, with only the government wharfinger, who is to be a sort of referee. I suppose. The wharfinger would be a local man getting very little pay, who cannot be expected to be there and settle all grievances as they come up, to be on hand all the time, unless you pay him a pretty good salary. So you really have the company that rents it doing business with the people instead of having the people doing business with the government. I am