

Mr. ARTHURS: Are these various services under contract with the steamship companies at a specific sum?

Mr. ROBB: These local services that we have under consideration are under contract renewed from year to year and subject to the amount being voted by parliament.

Mr. ARTHURS: Does that apply to all these items?

Mr. ROBB: No, to some of these local items. These services are largely to provide transportation for Canadian citizens who have no railways to serve them, and it is very much cheaper for the country to provide this service than it would be to build railways for them.

Mr. BROWN: Does this include carrying the mails?

Mr. ROBB: Yes, the mails are carried free.

Mr. ARTHURS: The minister's previous remark would apply only to certain services, not to the Canada-New Zealand service, Prince Rupert and San Francisco, and so on. Are these also under contract from year to year?

Mr. ROBB: Those items are standing for further consideration.

Mr. ARTHURS: They are all under the same heading and I was just asking for information.

Mr. ROBB: Some of these contracts run for a number of years.

Item agreed to.

Grand Manan and the mainland, steam service between, \$15,000.

Mr. ARTHURS: What is the population of Grand Manan approximately?

Mr. KENNEDY (Edmonton): Are these steamships privately owned?

Mr. ROBB: Privately owned.

Mr. KENNEDY (Edmonton): Can the government's boats not be used on any of these services?

Mr. ROBB: Not many of the government boats are suitable for these services.

Mr. KENNEDY (Edmonton): What were the Canadian Government Merchant Marine boats built for? They do not seem suitable for anything.

Mr. ROBB: My hon. friend is in part correct with regard to some of the smaller ves-

[Mr. Robb.]

sels. Some of them are hardly suitable for upper lake traffic or for coast traffic.

Answering my hon. friend for Parry Sound, I have not the figures but my recollection is that the population of these islands is about 7,000.

Mr. ARTHURS: My recollection is that it is very much under 4,000, and at that figure it would mean that we are paying \$4 a head for this service, which to my mind seems excessive.

Mr. ROBB: Even if my hon friend is correct and there are only 4,000 Canadian citizens on these islands producing products, does he think the government should not provide transportation for them?

Mr. ARTHURS: I do not suggest that for a moment, but I think \$15,000 is quite a large amount, and we have many places in Canada where there are 4,000 Canadian citizens who do not get as good a mail service.

Mr. GARDINER: The minister remarked just now that there were four or five thousand people in this particular district that required transportation. Does the minister mean to apply that same principle to the outlying parts of northern Ontario, Quebec and the Northwest Territories, where people are living fifty and sixty and one hundred miles from a railway?

Mr. ROBB: Generally speaking it has been the policy of governments in the past to provide transportation so far as possible for its citizens. These people are among the oldest settlers in Canada and are living in probably the oldest part of Canada. They are somewhat differently situated from people on the mainland. They live on islands or along the coast.

Mr. ARTHURS: Does the minister say that this amount is for the purpose of providing transportation facilities for these people? The estimate is for post office and mail service.

Mr. ROBB: These ships carry the mails free.

Mr. ARTHURS: Then this \$15,000 is to provide transportation for these people on the island?

Mr. ROBB: For the transportation of their products and carrying the mails.

Mr. ARTHURS: In other words, as the minister says that they carry the mails free, this item is to provide transportation for these people back and forth to the mainland. How does that come under the Post Office Department?