

APPENDIX No. 5

shippers that while they looked forward with a great deal of pleasant anticipation to the conveying of goods between the Maritime Provinces, or Eastern Canada, and British Columbia, the rates established by the Canadian Government Merchant Marine are prohibitive, and I would suggest to this Committee they could call one gentleman in this building who would be a very good witness in the person of Senator Macdonald, who is President of a large piano works, who informs me the rate he can get from New York to Vancouver, as compared with the rate from here, is very low indeed, in fact, he makes the statement that he cannot ship his goods from the Maritime Provinces to Vancouver at the rate which is being charged. I know nothing whatever about the rates. I only call your attention to this, so that these matters may be investigated when you are considering the enlarged and improved service. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I thank you.

By the Chairman:

Q. Do you wish to answer all of these questions now?—A. I can answer some of them now. In answer to various questions which Mr. Logan has been we are not fulfilling our obligation with respect to the frequency of service, and agents in the West Indies. We have a representative in the West Indies now who is somewhat stealthily investigating that aspect of it. I think there is need for some alteration, with respect to our agents, and eliminating the competitive feature to which you have referred. Now, how far we should go, or just what the position is, I do not know, but I have a pronounced suspicion with respect to the character of the service we are getting.

Mr. LOGAN: May I suggest the consideration of sending out our own agents from Canada? Although they would not be familiar with conditions at first, they would be interested in Canada and Canada alone.

The WITNESS: I cannot say what we ought to do, but our attention has been drawn to that, and we are going into it.

With respect to the insufficiency of the service to the Barbadoes and the Western Islands, it is a fact, as has already been pointed out here to-day, that we are not fulfilling our obligation with respect to the frequency of service, nor the passenger accommodations are not such as to invite increases in the passenger business. I can only say in connection with that, that we did the best we could with what we had to do with. Some of these vessels which are carrying passengers to the West Indies were not designed for that service; that service was an afterthought, after the vessels were built, and we had to furnish passengers' quarters as best we could, but they are not satisfactory. The promenade decks are insufficient, the lavatory facilities are also insufficient, so are the bathrooms, and, while you can get along with them, they are not what we would call first-class, modern facilities, such as would incite increased travel.

Mr. LOGAN: You give a splendid dining-saloon service.

The WITNESS: That is only a question of buying food and having good cooks. That is in our own hands to regulate, but, broadly speaking, I do not think the character of the service we are providing is in fulfilment of treaty obligations, and as a result of that we have been talking about additional vessels of a more modern type.

In respect to the coal; I presume our coal is inspected, and we presume it ought to be good coal. (To Mr. Doherty) Have you had any complaints about the coal?

Mr. DOHERTY: It so often happens, Sir Henry, that if an engineer is making slow time, he will blame his coal. He does not hesitate to do that. I know, while it is not my own department, that our Engineering Department is paying special attention to coal.

[Sir Henry Thornton.]