

knots. The present average speed of the fastest boats is dangerously near 22 knots.

This is not a finality. Each new boat built for highest speed exceeds the previous one. The past two or three decades show an increase of nearly three knots for every decade. Let this increase go on for the next decade, and before the end of that time boats of 26 or 27 knots speed may be constructed, which means that Canada will be as far behind New York at the expiration of the next 10 or 12 years as she is now. The American lines in that case, will have the same proportion of travel as they have averaged during the past decade, about 500,000 to our 25,000.

In 1887, the Canadian government decided to subsidize a line of fast Atlantic steamships to carry mails in competition with New York, and advertised for tenders, insisting on an average speed of 20 knots an hour. At that time such a guaranteed speed would have placed Canada abreast of New York; but considering the advance made on the American routes since, it would be a mistake to build new boats of 20 knots at a very large outlay for the next 10 to 15 years. They would be too far behind New York in speed before half the time expires to be of any benefit as a fast service to the country. It would also be a mistake to tie up the postal subvention fund of the Dominion in the form of such a large subsidy on a 20-knot service, for the next 10 or 12 years. By the recent amendment to the contract even that speed is not guaranteed.

Germany, by means of state assistance, is now leading England in trans-Atlantic speed. The new contract with the French government calls for boats which will take less time between Havre and New York than that attained by Germany. But neither of these nations, with their large populations and strong navies, is nearly as much in need of a fast service as Canada; nor will they benefit by such a service as much as the Dominion.

Ten years have passed in fruitless efforts to establish a Canadian fast line. The uncertainty of who would get the contract prevented the Allans from improving their service, and in the meantime the cream of trans-Atlantic traffic has gone to the United States.

The failure in securing a Canadian fast service during the past decade will be dealt upon in another article.