

Hon. Mr. MARLER: I would just like to add a word to that, Mr. Chairman. I was in Barbados during the Christmas holiday...

Mr. FULTON: Go down by Canadian National Steamships?

Mr. BELL: He could not get on the list.

Hon. Mr. MARLER: I was in Barbados at the Christmas vacation and I heard down there that a great deal of interest was expressed locally in the purchase of Canadian apples, for example. And also, as Mr. Batten mentioned a little earlier, there is the question of shipping Newfoundland fish. I must say personally I think it is a very good thing for Canadian trade to keep up this steamship connection between Canada and the West Indies so as to further the trade. I think the trade would be more if it were not for the fact that currency deficits in the island make it necessary for them to restrict their imports, which they have to pay for in Canadian dollars.

Mr. BELL: Mr. Marler, in that connection when we have the completions made to the refrigeration processes in these ships will that be sufficient to take care of all the demands for refrigerated service such as the ones you are into?

Mr. GORDON: If I may answer that, the situation here is exactly the same as the situation which we discussed in the railway in respect of the peak loads. We believe the refrigeration we are now putting in the ships and which will be completed by about May or June—two are completed now and the others probably May or June...

Mr. BELL: What ships?

Mr. GORDON: All the ships will be refrigerated then and we believe that they will be able to take care of all available shipping, with the single exception of perhaps the month of December when there is a big demand for apples around the Christmas season, and there may be some shortages at that time. Apart from that, throughout the year we believe we have ample accommodation.

Mr. BELL: In connection, Mr. Gordon, with exploring new possibilities and in your quest for other freight contracts in the general West Indies area, I think we mentioned last year that you have field men or contacts who attempt to promote generally the steamship line. I was wondering, there, if any consideration had been given to a stop at Haiti.

Mr. GORDON: Well, perhaps it would be a good time for me to say this. Since we disposed of the Lady boats we have gradually got this service into what I call a freight minded service. In the past with the passenger ships, the luxury cruisers, they tended to overwhelm the whole operation and keep it on a standard where it had a very heavy loss. Since we have given up that luxury service, we still have a small passenger carrying capacity but it is not in the same luxury class, and we have been able to devote our attention much more specifically to the business of freight trade carrying, carrying of freight. And I am glad in Mr. Sauve's presence here to pay him a particular tribute in that respect. Mr. Sauve became our general manager in April last year and he has exhausted all ways and means of increasing our trade capacity in freight. In that connection he has made a survey with a view to recommending further improvements and calling at further ports in the West Indies. I believe Haiti is one of the things we have in mind right now. We will make some experiments this year to see if we can develop trade at this point. Some will be wrong but we are going to try them and see if we can keep that service and still keep up our schedules. We are making an additional effort to get more trade.

Mr. BELL: Well, are you perfectly satisfied with the fleet size at the present time and do you foresee any development in demand in the foreseeable future?