

Mr. DOHERTY: The modern freight steamer built for the tramping trade is so equipped that she can handle cargoes better than we can with our vessels which are not built essentially for such a trade.

Hon. Mr. STEVENS: You mean, for instance, vessels of 'tween deck construction.

Mr. DOHERTY: Yes. These steamers have been operating in a certain trade, but we find that their slow speed operates against the possibility of our getting a paying cargo.

Hon. Mr. STEVENS: Take an ordinary freighter—I see hundreds of them each year—such as are carrying cargoes of grain and lumber from Vancouver, or such as stop at Montreal; what speed do they make?

Mr. DOHERTY: About the same speed as our steamers, except that the more modern tramp steamers will make greater speed, but the general run—

Hon. Mr. STEVENS: I am speaking of the general run.

Mr. DOHERTY: The speeds will be about the same.

Hon. Mr. STEVENS: Of course they will.

Sir HENRY THORNTON: Another thing which I think has had some effect—Mr. Doherty can correct me if I am wrong—is that since the war there has been a very considerable ocean tonnage built of a very modern character, with respect to which we come into competition, and one of the effects of that has been to put out of business a very large number of our older ships. For instance, last Easter, I saw in the James river I should think about sixty ships which were built by the United States Government during the war, and which are simply anchored there doing nothing. They looked from the outside to be fairly serviceable ships; yet, because of their relatively small size and perhaps their slower speed, they cannot be used commercially. So we come into competition with a considerable increment of ocean tonnage of a modern character, built since the war. I do not say that I saw dozens of ships; I saw acres of ships. I think they estimate them by the acre, and they were anchored in the James river, and apparently there was no use for them.

Mr. HANSON: You can see them yarded up in the Panama canal. I have seen lots of them.

Mr. JELLIFF: If I may venture to go back to my former question with respect to the reduction of rates, I think it came out yesterday that there were some reductions on flour, and if I remember rightly, on lumber. I would like to know how many commodity rate reductions there were, to try and bring out the fact whether we will have to face the same factor in the future.

Sir HENRY THORNTON: I think what you have in mind is a general statement with respect to the rate situation last year as compared with the year before.

Mr. DOHERTY: Every service has had its own peculiar difficulties, and to give Mr. Jelliff a general answer would scarcely be fair. If we could deal with the different services as they are, or as they have been, we could tell you what the corresponding earnings have been.

Sir HENRY THORNTON: Mr. Jelliff, I think an answer to your question will emerge when we come to consider each one of the routes with the earnings and deficits of each route. At that time the rate situation can be revealed more intelligently than by giving you a general answer now, which probably would not mean anything.

Mr. JELLIFF: There is one answer which perhaps you can give, as to whether there was anything like a general reduction.

Mr. DOHERTY: In certain of our services the reductions were very drastic—

Mr. WOOD: And wholesale.