

Mr. WILSON. What is your opinion ?

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. My opinion is that we must be governed by the state of trade and the success in developing our winter port service. That service is very properly regarded by both sides of the House as a matter of very considerable national importance, and all these subsidies are for the purpose of aiding and sustaining it. The hon. gentleman knows very well that ports like Glasgow, Dublin and Belfast are not merely considerable cities, but they are centres of a very large population, and everything that contributes to bring Canadian products into active consumption there is worth a considerable deal to the people of Canada. That is the chief reason which induced us to do this, and the chief reason which, I suppose, will induce the House to continue it.

Mr. SPROULE. Is the amount of trade rapidly increasing at St. John ?

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. It has increased very considerably. Of course it will greatly depend on the amount of grain that comes forward. Last year they did not send as much as the year before, but that was very largely due to the shortage of the American corn crop which affected all the various lines of transport very materially. As a rule it has been a very rapid increase during the last four years at any rate.

Mr. SPROULE. Has the minister any figures that would give an approximate estimate of the quantity of grain handled at St. John ?

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. I can obtain that for my hon. friend if he wishes—does he mean by these particular lines or in a general way ?

Mr. SPROULE. I mean from all lines that sail from that port.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. Perhaps my hon. friend (Hon. Mr. Blair) would know that.

Hon. Mr. BLAIR. I cannot say what the exact amount of the trade is. I have the figures at home, but I am sorry I have not them here at this moment. The statement made by the Minister of Trade and Commerce is correct that last year it fell off, but the year before it was the largest we have had, and the year before that was larger than the preceding year.

Mr. SPROULE. Of course that information is of no use whatever because it does not indicate whether there was 1,000,000 bushels or 50,000,000. It is desirable that we should know what advantage is taken of these winter ports especially in the case of grain, for that must have an important bearing on the future as to whether this grain can profitably be shipped by rail to St. John during the winter season.

Mr. WILSON. We should also know what proportion went over the Intercolonial Railway and what proportion went over the Canadian Pacific Railway to St. John. I have been told by people who ought to know that the Canadian Pacific Railway has not been able to carry grain to the seaboard except at a loss and that then it was used for ballasting ships that they had to furnish cargo for. The government ought to be able to tell us whether that is true or not.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. The hon. gentleman is correct thus far; that the Canadian Pacific Railway has probably carried the grain without profit, but I do not think it has carried it at a down-right loss.

Mr. WILSON. I have my information from pretty good authority.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. They are not very fond of that St. John line and their views may be a little pessimistic. I do not think they carried it at a loss, but they certainly did not make a profit on it.

Mr. WILSON. The reason they carried it was to furnish cargoes for the ships.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. They have to run cars to St. John and I suppose they want ballast for their cars as well as for their ships.

Mr. WILSON. There may have been some profit in the shipping part of it, but the information I have is that they made a loss on the railway haul.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. I think it is perfectly true they made no profit.

Mr. WILSON. Can we get the quantities carried by each of these railways ?

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. I have a record of the quantity going forward in the various steamship lines, but I would have to get the other information from the Intercolonial Railway, and also from the Canadian Pacific Railway, which, of course, is not under our control.

Mr. WILSON. Will you get the figures for us ?

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. Certainly, if you want them. There will be an opportunity on the supplementary estimates.

A line or lines of steamers to run during the summer months between St. John, Halifax and London, and during the winter months between St. John and London direct and Halifax and London direct, \$40,000.

Mr. WADE. With regard to this item, I may say that in the past the contract has been given to the Furness-Withy Company, and there have been very serious complaints as to the manner in which