

Grey was taken off the route, having been sold to the Government of Russia, and she was replaced on the Charlottetown-Pictou route by the Stanley. The facilities for bunkering on the Stanley were less adequate than those on the Earl Grey and the Minto, and consequently it was necessary to pay a larger figure. The Minto having been sold to the Russian Government, before winter navigation last season commenced, her place was taken by the Prince Edward Island, the steam ferry that will run between Cape Tormentine and Cape Traverse. Under arrangement with the Railways and Canals Department this vessel is being operated by the Marine and Fisheries Department for the present season. Last fall a contract was entered into with Messrs. W. T. Gilchrist, Hugh A. MacMillan and Z. Cook, for handling freight and baggage on the Stanley and the Prince Edward Island for 45 cents per ton, while bunker coal was to be placed on the Stanley for 55 cents a ton and on the Prince Edward Island at 70 cents a ton, which figures out at 62½ cents as against 67½ cents paid in previous years. So, my hon. friend will say that so far as prices are concerned a lower price is being paid this year than last year or the year before both for baggage and freight and for bunker coal.

In October of last year, an application was received from Mr. Joseph Benoit, Secretary of the International Longshoremen's Association of Pictou, to be awarded the contract of handling freight and coal at Pictou during the present season. That, I think, was the first intimation that the department had that an international union had been organized in Pictou. My hon. friend has stated that a letter addressed to the Deputy Minister had been left without reply. The Deputy Minister is most punctual in attending to correspondence, and my own instructions are that all letters are to be answered as promptly as possible. So, if my hon. friend is correctly informed, there must have been some accident, misunderstanding, or oversight. When this offer was received, it was felt that as the association had only been organized and the department had no positive information as to its ability to successfully carry out the work, it might be better for the present season that the arrangement to which I have referred should be completed, especially in view of the fact that the contract prices were, as I have pointed out,

[Mr. Hazen.]

lower than during the two previous years, and were reported on by the officers of the department as being reasonable in every respect. My hon. friend has suggested that the work has not been successfully carried out by these contractors. But the information which he has received is not in keeping with that which we have received. Complaint was received at the department, subsequent to the commencement of the winter service, that freight was not being promptly handled at Pictou by the contractors. This complaint was investigated and it was ascertained that there was nothing to justify it. My information from the officials of the department, I think, is correct, that freight and coal at Pictou this winter are being handled with the usual promptness, as it is at Charlottetown, where the work is performed by the Longshoremen's Association. My sympathies are entirely with an organization such as the Longshoremen's Association, organized for the purpose of doing business. We employ the Longshoremen's Association at Charlottetown and get good results, and if this business continues another year, I can assure my hon. friend we will give every possible consideration to the claims and qualifications of the Longshoremen's Association for the handling of the work required to be done at the port of Pictou. It is possible that next year there will be very little work, if any, at Pictou for these ships if the car ferry is completed and necessary docks built and railway connections established so that there will be crossing between Cape Tormentine and Cape Traverse. I assure my hon. friend, however, that if there is any business in this line, the matter will receive every consideration at our hands. The Longshoremen's union is a worthy organization, and I hope it will continue to be very successful.

Mr. HUGHES: I have just come into the Chamber, but I know the purport of this discussion. I heard the minister say that he did not think present conditions would continue very long. It is anticipated, I know, that the car ferry will be in operation within a reasonable time, but I suppose the piers will not be ready by the opening of navigation this year.

Mr. HAZEN: We are speaking of winter navigation.

Mr. HUGHES: Is the minister in a position to say what arrangement the Government is making or will make for transportation between the mainland and Prince Edward Island at the opening of navigation