

14-15 GEORGE V, A. 1924

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Black, who is not a member of this committee, would like to ask a few questions. Is it the desire of the committee that he be permitted to do so?

Some Hon. MEMBERS: Yes.

*By Mr. Black (Halifax):*

Q. You were speaking just now of the four ships. You admit that of the present fleet, none of them are suitable for the West Indies trade?—A. Not for the character of trade we would like to get, and such service as we would like to give. We have performed a character of service with our present ships, but we feel that if we had these four new ones we could entirely fulfil our obligations to the West Indies, which Sir Henry Drayton pointed out we are not fulfilling to-day.

Q. What Islands would they touch?

Mr. DOHERTY: The four steamers would be used—

The WITNESS: The same islands as we do now.

Mr. DOHERTY: The Windward Islands, that is, Demerara and so on.

The WITNESS: Barbadoes, Trinidad, Nassau, and Kingston. I think if we had these four new ships we would be able to reconsider the whole West Indies proposition. We would have to send these ships to certain of the larger islands where there is considerable traffic, and then establish some sort of a pickup service in the West Indies.

*By Mr. Black:*

Q. An inter-island service, such as the Royal Mail had a few years ago and abandoned?—A. I think the United Fruit Service have a service of that kind.

The CHAIRMAN: I was told the other day that was one of their strongholds, that the United Fruit Company had the larger ships for calling at the larger ports, but also had the inter-island service.

Mr. BLACK: They have two or three small crafts?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes. We have certain duties to perform, I think, under our treaty. I am told that this service could be performed by smaller ships than we need for the other service.

The WITNESS: We are making a study of that now, to see what the prospects are, and how it ought to be organized.

*By Hon. Mr. Graham:*

Q. I would like to speak about these smaller ships. In that connection when you are investigating, do you not think it would be wise to ascertain clearly if the service we want to perform under our treaty could not be performed by two, or a lesser number than four of the larger ships, with an additional small boat. The reason I say this is because a gentleman, a friend of mine and well acquainted with you too, made quite a study of business down there, and discussed the matter with me the other night and said that he believed that two of these newer ships, perhaps, could perform the service we had in mind.—A. That is something worth considering.

Q. With the use of the smaller ships between the islands?—A. Yes.

*By Mr. Black:*

Q. What do you mean by that?—A. I would include everything that would give us a paying cargo and assist in fulfilling even beyond the terms of the treaty we have there.