

Sir HENRY THORNTON: That was all gone into pretty carefully by our own marine experts, and by our own marine architect, and we felt that we should increase the power of these vessels, because in this service we are from time to time encountering fogs when it is necessary to slow down the speed of the vessel, and when the fog lifts we have got to have enough reserve power to make up the time we have lost. Now, the power of the vessels as they stand to-day is correct according to our own competent navigating officers, our own marine experts, and our own naval architects.

Mr. DUFF: What is their speed?

Sir HENRY THORNTON: Twenty-three and a half knots.

Mr. DUFF: That is not too much.

Mr. FRASER: Have you had any reports from your navigating officers as to their efficiency, or as to the way they handle?

Sir HENRY THORNTON: They are entirely satisfactory.

Mr. FRASER: Have you ever had to have them taken out of the harbour at Victoria with the assistance of a tug?

Mr. GALLOWAY: Not that I know of.

Sir HENRY THORNTON: I do not think so. I should be surprised to hear that.

Mr. DUFF: Perhaps they were in drydock and the tug took them down to the berth afterwards.

Mr. FRASER: Have they been in drydock?

Mr. GALLOWAY: Yes.

Mr. DUFF: I saw the *Lady Nelson* being towed down in Halifax Harbour.

Sir HENRY THORNTON: The answer is that unless there is an occasional extraordinary set of circumstances, the vessels do not require the services of tugs. They are thoroughly satisfactory from a navigation point of view.

Mr. FRASER: The reason I asked that question, Sir Henry was this: it has been reported to me that those vessels in entering and departing from Victoria Harbour required the assistance of a tug, and I thought it was only right that you should have an opportunity of confirming the rumor or refuting it.

Sir HENRY THORNTON: I am glad you asked that question and my reply is in the negative.

Mr. HANBURY: I would like to make a statement in that connection because there are rumors in Victoria that these boats are hard to handle. I do not want to say that there was deliberate propaganda to discredit the boats, but propaganda existed that these boats were hard to handle. I went to the Masters of these boats, and also to the Canadian National Railways in Victoria, and I have satisfied myself that they are satisfactory and just as easily handled as any boats on the Pacific Coast to-day.

Mr. DUFF: It is quite possible that they might have been hard to handle on the first two or three trips; they may have wanted a piece on their rudder or something like that. We cannot help that.

Sir HENRY THORNTON: There is one particularly difficult part of the passage between Prince Rupert and Skagway which requires very careful handling and manoeuvring, and I was on the bridge with the captain of the vessel, the master of the vessel, and the master of one of the other vessels—an experienced Scotch navigator who had been all over the world—and I asked them how the vessel handled, and whether they were satisfied with the vessel, and they said that the vessel I was on—one of the new ones—was of the easiest and best handling vessels they have ever seen. Certainly from what I observed—I am not a sailor—I am a very bad sailor—from what I observed of the vessel, it certainly handled with extraordinary facility.