

Mr. SPROULE. I thought there was cold storage with ice ?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. Yes, before I made the change.

Mr. SPROULE. Then we have mechanical cold storage for the passage of cool air in the chambers. How many vessels were fitted out last year with mechanical cold storage, and would the hon. minister give us the freight rate that is charged on such vessels as compared with the freight rate on ordinary vessels ? Because I am told that many shippers choose to take the ordinary vessel rather than the vessel provided with cold storage, finding that it does not pay them to pay the additional expense incurred by shipment in cold storage.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. For what kind of goods ?

Mr. SPROULE. Cheese and butter. Cheese was one of the articles in regard to which I heard the statement and that therefore they chose to send it in an ordinary vessel without cold storage.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. Cheese has hardly ever been sent in what we call the cold storage chamber of these vessels. The cheese men, as a general rule, have not considered it necessary to send cheese in cold storage.

Mr. CLANCY. That was tried for a time, was it not ?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. A few shipments were tried but very little was sent. I do not think any butter is now being sent from Canada except in cold storage chambers. I am not aware of any single shipment being made and if there has been at rare intervals a single shipment it must be very slight. There were about 420,000 packages of butter carried in cold storage last season and one solitary shipment not in cold storage.

Mr. SPROULE. No cheese at all ?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. No cheese has been carried in the cold storage insulated chambers. The ventilated chambers with cold storage draught for the forcing of cool air through the holds are intended for the purpose of carrying cheese and apples and these are the cold storage arrangements which I am trying to make. During last fall I got four steamers fitted up with this kind of cold storage and I expect to have ten other steamers fitted up for the present season. That is the new arrangement which we have been pressing upon the ship owners and the public for the last year. However, as to the ships that are fitted with the older cold storage, that is to say insulated chambers which you can cool down to the freezing point and below if you choose, we have none of these under contract, but we have a

number which were under contract which are still in the trade. Prof. Robertson informs me that there were last year 77 sailings from Montreal of some 17 different steamers fitted up with cold storage accommodation.

Mr. SPROULE. What are relative freight rates on these vessels as compared with ordinary steamers ?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. Ten shillings a ton extra for cold storage accommodation, I believe, is generally charged. I also hear that sometimes fifteen shillings is charged. I suppose that when there is a great demand for accommodation fifteen shillings is charged, and that when there is less demand, ten shillings. But these vessels being no longer under contract, we have no control over the rates that they charge.

Mr. SPROULE. In what kind of cold storage was the trial shipment of tomatoes and grapes made some years ago ?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. They were sent in the regular cold storage.

Mr. SPROULE. Have you sent any fruit by the new system ?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. We have not sent any of the delicate fruits. It is intended for apples.

Mr. SPROULE. I wish to get some information which might be useful to the people of the country. I have on more than once been met on the platform by friends of the Minister of Agriculture who have stated that the cold storage system was so perfect that our butter and cheese and eggs and fruit were now laid down in perfect condition on the English market. I contradicted that, but the statement was repeated most positively. I am glad that the minister has been frank enough to admit that in most cases it has been a failure and that they are now experimenting.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. Oh, no.

Mr. SPROULE. He tells us that none of the steamers are fitted with the first system of cold storage he introduced.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. Not at all. As a matter of fact last year seventy-seven steamers sailing from Montreal were fitted with the very system of cold storage that was first introduced by my department. The contracts with these steamers have terminated, but the owners are continuing the cold storage system which under our contracts we required them to put in.

Mr. SPROULE. Has it been a success ?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. A perfect success.

Hon. Mr. FISHER.