

Mr. LOW: In 1923. The contract is with the Weymouth Transportation Company, for one year. It provides for a weekly service. The Nova Scotia government pays a subsidy of \$2,000.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: What business is there?

Mr. LOVETT: This boat plies between Weymouth, Freeport, Westport, Tiverton, Little River, New Edinburgh, Plympton, and many other places where there is no rail connection. It is a very small subsidy. This boat is not making any money; the contractors just about broke even last year.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: What was done before 1923?

Mr. LOVETT: I am not able to say what was done before, but I know that this subsidy is to give the people a much needed service.

Item agreed to.

Sydney and Bay St. Lawrence, calling at way ports, steam service between, \$18,000.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: There is a 100 per cent increase here.

Mr. LOW: The contract was entered into in 1924. The contractors are the North Shore Steamship Company, of Sydney. The boat was wrecked last year and we called for tenders. The lowest tender received was \$20,000, but we succeeded in reducing it to \$18,000.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: What was the name of the old boat?

Mr. LOW: The Aspy.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: Who was the owner?

Mr. LOW: The North Shore Steamship Company.

Mr. KELLNER: From what the minister says it would almost seem that if a company's boat is wrecked, or for some other reason a contractor wants more money, about all he has to do to get it is to put in a tender. Surely there must be a limit above which the government refuses to go.

Mr. LOW: I am sure if my hon. friend lived in an isolated territory he would regard it as the duty of the government to provide some kind of service for the people in that territory, just as it is the duty of the government to try to provide railway service for people living in the interior. These people have no other service than the steamship service.

[Sir Henry Drayton.]

Mr. KELLNER: If these were compassionate allowances it might be different, but I thought the matter was being dealt with as a business undertaking.

Mr. LOW: That is what it is—to provide service for these people.

Mr. KELLNER: I cannot gather that from the remarks the minister has just made. It certainly sounded to me as though business never entered into the matter. The people simply needed the service and it was decided to give it to them. The cost was not an important consideration at all.

Mr. CALDWELL: Would it be a "moral claim in equity?"

Mr. CARROLL: This service starts from Sydney and follows a route which is one of the stormiest on the whole coast of America. It goes between St. Paul's island and Cape North, and it is near there that the old boat was lost last fall. The old boat cost about \$27,000 and the present boat is costing in the vicinity of \$70,000. They did not want to enter into a contract at all, and I do not believe they would have given a service here had it not been for the fact that last September or thereabouts plaster works were opened at Ingonish, which is one of the way ports and quite a populous place, and they thought they might make something out of passenger traffic down the coast. There is no railway through any part of this place. It is a mountainous country and it is impossible to take goods through there on auto trucks or anything else. As the minister has said, the contract was entered into for \$2,000 less than the lowest tender.

Mr. KELLNER: It is a question whether it would not be better for the people to move out of there. If they are in an isolated section of the country I do not see why they should want to continue to live there. If you would adopt the same principle that is followed in the west, that is, refuse to give them railroad service or any facilities at all for communication with the rest of the country, they would get out, the same as our farmers and residents in the west are doing. But we have a different country and a different class of citizens. We have a country in which it is possible to produce a very large tonnage of exportable grain, whereas in the district now under discussion the only thing produced, I understand, is a relatively small quantity of fish. If it is good business to keep a few people isolated in a frontier settlement like this, I do not see why it should not be better