

By Hon. Mr. Turriff:

Q. Isn't the position this—that they cannot expect to pay on the high cost?—
A. Yes.

Q. And they have to come in competition with the tramp steamers?—A. Sure. Why shouldn't they come in competition with tramp steamers in Canada, instead of chasing all over for trade?

By Hon. Mr. Todd:

Q. There are a good many of them tied up?—A. As far as the operation of Government steamers is concerned, you can give a great deal of credit to the people that are running them. You cannot put your finger on anything very gross; they don't make many mistakes such as anybody would that runs a line of steamers, but taking it as a whole I would say that the department have run their steamers very successfully. I think the Government steamers compare very favourably with the run of the American steamers, but what I do say more than anything else, and what I told Mr. Borden, was that to build little steamers when we have no trade for them, when other lines have ships to suit their trade, is throwing money away. They are sending those boats on the Atlantic. I think they should be employed on our regular trades. They are being put on the line from Montreal to Vancouver, but I don't think it is good policy to send them all over the world—to Australia and India—and take six months to take the round voyage. I think their costs are greater than they should be unless they could get good cargoes.

By Hon. Mr. Bennett:

Q. Assuming that this boat is carrying grain to England with a complete cargo, two hundred thousand bushels, would it be profitable for her on coming back to load with coal at Sydney for Montreal?—A. You have asked me a question now that goes right down to it. I carried a cargo of coal from Sydney at 60 cents a ton on a ten-thousand ton boat, and did not get my expenses out of it. It came from England, went into Louisburg last week, carried ten thousand tons and delivered it to Montreal at 60 cents a ton; the shipper paid loading expenses, and I could barely get expenses out of it. If it is a question of filling up time I would say yes.

Q. But on the question of making money so as to help the wretched outgoing?—
A. I don't think that she would make any money, because the type of boat that is required for the coal trade is the single-deck boat, and not double-deck. If you have 'tween-deck boats it means your coal is going to cost you a great deal more to handle in and out. Single-deck boats can carry coal up to Quebec and Montreal and probably pay their expenses, but they require a larger revenue, because they cannot be run so cheaply as a large boat.

By Hon. Mr. Webster:

Q. A boat of that kind, with its easy trimming and easy discharge, can carry coal cheaper from Sydney or Louisburg to Montreal than a tramp steamer or an outside steamer such as you have described?—A. Yes.

Q. That is the whole story?—A. There is not the revenue.

Q. And therefore there are steamers that are especially built in England for that trade?—A. Yes, coal companies can charter at very low rates, that probably do not return the owners much more than bare interest on the cost or on their value in competition with me and others. I might explain that matter a little further. If you take a cargo of coal, it means that you have to clean your ship out. Now in carrying grain you have to have what is called grain fittings, to prevent the cargo from shifting. If you put a cargo of coal into that vessel you will destroy your grain fittings to some extent, at any rate you will soil them, and the time lost in cleaning and preparing for grain will take away whatever profit you make, so I don't think it is a profitable proposition.