

to get bargain freight rates as a result of dealing with this particular line. Many retail merchants are asking for this privilege and I hope the minister in the recess will look into it, and see if there is not some way of extending this very admirable system of steamship subsidies to many boats on the Great Lakes so as to enable them to regulate and bring down freight and passenger rates. Competition by water traffic is one of the most important factors in the problem of solving transportation in central Canada to-day, and I believe that we can extend this principle to the head of the lakes. It would confer a boon on the public generally.

Item agreed to.

Quebec or Montreal, and Gaspé and ports on the south shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, steam service between, \$30,000.

Mr. KENNEDY (Edmonton): There are cases parallel to this in northern Alberta. There are large sections of the country there served by river steamers in the summer months, one company covering over three thousand miles. Are these companies entitled to the subsidy?

Mr. ROBB: I am aware that there are steamers plying in the North on the Mackenzie, but there is no record in the department of any request for a subsidy. We should have to be satisfied that any such request was reasonable, and if my hon. friend can give us that satisfaction we shall be glad to take the matter into consideration.

Item agreed to.

St. John and Bear river, and other wayports, steam service between, \$2,000.

Mr. BOYS: This is a new service.

Mr. ROBB: It was established last year.

Mr. BOYS: There are one or two members who want to speak on this item.

Mr. ROBB: We will let it stand.

Mr. BOYS: I will ask that item 208 be allowed to stand too.

Item stands.

St. John and Digby, steam service between, \$15,000.

Mr. GARDINER: There seems to be a duplication between this item and the next.

Mr. ROBB: The two items relate to different services. One goes to St. John and Digby and the other runs up to Annapolis and Grenville.

Mr. CALDWELL: Is this the Canadian Pacific line between St. John and Digby?

[Mr. Church.]

Mr. ROBB: Yes, the contractors are the Dominion and Atlantic Railway Company.

Mr. MARTELL: Is this the subsidy for the boat that goes from St. John to Pictou along the Bay of Fundy and into the Minas basin to Windsor, in Hants county?

Mr. ROBB: No, that is another item.

Item agreed to.

St. John and ports on the Bay of Fundy and Minas basin, steam service between, \$8,000.

Mr. ROBB: The hon. member for Simeon wishes to have this item stand.

Mr. MARTELL: I understand that this is the item that refers to the service between St. John and intermediate ports to Windsor. If so I should like to have a report from the minister as to how it has been performed. There has been some complaint from the merchants of Windsor and the people of that place that the service is not satisfactory.

Item stands.

St. John, Westport and Yarmouth and other waybasin, steam service between, \$8,000.

Mr. CHURCH: Does this item come under the British North America Act? Is it a work for the general advantage of Canada? I think that the provinces should contribute in part to work of this local character. I am glad to see the Maritime provinces get all that they can because they deserve as adequate transportation facilities as can be provided them. At the same time, however, I think that the principle of subsidizing steamboats in the Maritime provinces should be extended throughout the country generally to the head of the lakes. It may be argued that this is work for the general advantage of Canada. If so, is it the intention of the government to extend it to Ontario, where there are many towns along the Great Lakes that have no railway facilities, and many flag stations? A steamboat service on the Great Lakes is one that is badly needed from the standpoint of coal supplies and from the point of view of the farming interests. Owing to the lack of proper transportation facilities the crops in these localities have to lie on the ground and the result is there is under-production, rural depopulation and unemployment, with consequent economic distress. It has been stated by transportation people that the cure for this condition in the central provinces is the extension of the principle of transportation by waterway which is nursed and provided in the Maritime provinces by federal subsidies. I have no objection to the subsidizing of these Maritime