

*Ocean Shipping Rates*

Mr. DUFF: I shall not argue with my right hon. friend, I think we both threshed that question out before as regards the Canadian Government Merchant Marine ships.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Yes, but not the comparison.

Mr. DUFF: The fact remains that these ships of eleven knots, even would be faster.

Mr. MEIGHEN: That is the test speed.

Mr. DUFF: You will find that with the Diesel engines with which these ships will be equipped, they will be able to make their eleven knots at any time except, of course, in a very heavy gale of wind. The Canadian Government Merchant Marine ships are of very different construction and, with the engines they have, in very rough weather cannot make more than five knots actual speed. In mild weather, when the sea is smooth and calm, they could make, perhaps, nine knots. Nevertheless these ships of the Canadian Government Merchant Marine every year are getting slower and slower, with the result that if the government retains them much longer they will some day go on a voyage and never come back.

Mr. MEIGHEN: You are prejudiced on that subject.

Mr. DUFF: Let me say this also. There is no question but there is discrimination between American and Canadian ports; and sometimes in the Maritime provinces you hear a great hullabaloo, about the government operating a line of railway between Montreal and Portland, and our goods being shipped from the latter port to the Old Country instead of going through Canadian ports. Let me say that if this agreement does nothing else it will have the effect of bringing more goods to Canadian ports and having more ships come to those ports.

Mr. LADNER: Would the hon. gentleman point out in the agreement where there is any restriction against these boats calling at American ports as provided in the old agreement of 1897?

Mr. DUFF: Well, I do not remember if the agreement says these ships must sail from Canadian ports, but I certainly do say that no government would be fit for their position, and no Minister of Trade and Commerce would be fit for his if they or he entered into such a contract as this and allowed, as the old government did and as this government does vessels of the Canadian Government Merchant Marine to load in Portland and other American ports.

[Mr. Meighen.]

Mr. LADNER: Quite right, but the hon. gentleman will find that there is no control of that feature under this agreement.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Yes, paragraph (a) of clause 1.

Mr. DUFF: Perhaps if I quote the paragraph it will satisfy my hon. friend:

Build, equip, provide, establish and during this contract, continue and in the manner hereinafter mentioned, operate a regular shipping service between such ports in Great Britain or Ireland or the continent of Europe, and Canadian ports as may be designated by the Minister of Trade and Commerce for Canada or his representatives from time to time.

Mr. LADNER: Does the hon. gentleman suggest that having provided such a service the boats cannot call at foreign ports?

Mr. DUFF: I would certainly say in the first place that if there is not sufficient business for them in Canadian ports then it is a bad look-out for Canada. In the second place, as I said a moment ago, the government should not enter into a contract permitting these vessels to call at foreign ports as the vessels of the Canadian Government Merchant Marine now do. As I have already stated, one reason why I think we should support this contract is—that all the freight on these boats, either going east or coming west will be shipped from or arrive at Canadian ports instead of that freight going from or to Portland, New London, and other American ports. This arrangement will have a very direct effect upon the routing of that traffic. The British preference, which this government introduced, has had a certain effect; but under the present arrangement with the vessels coming and going through Canadian ports the cry should be stopped that the government are not doing anything to divert traffic from Portland to St. John, Halifax, and other Canadian ports.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Will the hon. gentleman follow that through just a moment? The ships of the Canadian Government Merchant Marine at present are not confined to Canadian ports but call at other ports. Now, what my hon. friend (Mr. Ladner) was pointing out is that this contract in no way prevents the Petersen boats from doing the same thing or empowers the government to prevent it.

Mr. DUFF: The difference between these boats and the Canadian Government Merchant Marine boats, as I understand it, is this—that these boats are going to make direct trips to Montreal or other Canadian ports.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The contract does not say so.