

Mr. McLEAN (Melfort): You have invested a certain amount of money in organization and experience and in losses which someone would have to spend in one way or another in starting in such a business. It seems to me it would be a pity to sacrifice that by going out of business.

Sir HENRY THORNTON: Those are all factors which have to be considered in connection with the Canadian Government Merchant Marine.

Hon. Mr. DUNNING: And it should not be forgotten that our West Indies policy was in the direction which you have indicated, providing new and better tonnage.

Mr. McLEAN (Melfort): I appreciate that.

Mr. GEARY: One needs to see it.

Mr. McLEAN (Melfort): You have made a big start, anyway. In reference to the Hudson Bay service, the factor of speed must be quite important in putting a useful service in there. For instance, you would meet the possibility of poor weather conditions and the possibility of ice towards the close of navigation, where small, slow boats might be in considerable danger, whereas up-to-date vessels would have a wider margin of safety.

Sir HENRY THORNTON: I should think that was unquestionably true, although I am not experienced in navigation.

Mr. McLEAN (Melfort): It seems to me that putting these smaller boats on, even as an experimental proposition, might injure the route a good deal because they might be unsafe.

Hon. Mr. STEVENS: I do not suggest the smaller boats, but the larger boats.

Sir HENRY THORNTON: The larger boats which might conceivably be put in this place are at present used to advantage in other services.

Mr. McLEAN (Melfort): I think it would take fairly fast boats to usefully demonstrate that route.

Hon. Mr. DUNNING: There is just one factor. Last summer the department had to secure quite a lot of lumber from British Columbia. Through the good offices of the Merchant Marine acting as agents for the department, a tramp boat was chartered and loaded three million feet of lumber at Vancouver, sailed around to the Panama and around through the Hudson Straits and she was about of eleven knots speed, if any memory serves me right,—that is subject to correction. I did have a rough analysis made, and the cost of taking that lumber in that way was cheaper than if it has been hauled in by rail, if the rail had been in. That is one interesting angle of the commercial experimental possibilities. We were not able to do that with a Merchant Marine ship at all, because the Merchant Marine ships are all profitably employed otherwise. They were employed in such a manner at that time that they could not be taken off.

Mr. GEARY: Something has been said about a reinforced ship.

Hon. Mr. DUNNING: We have not had any reinforced ships in there at all. The ordinary tramp vessel has taken in our stuff.

Hon. Mr. STEVENS: There is just one point to which I was trying to direct attention. It is not the question of types of ships or anything else; you are shipping on a new route.

Hon. Mr. DUNNING: You mean the commercial experiment, Mr. Stevens?

Hon. Mr. STEVENS: Exactly. You have a new route there. I thought that you might take a certain number of your ships—I used the word “dedicate” before—and dedicate them; then I used the word “consecrate” later,—putting them on that route, because unless you have arrangements with some steamship companies it will take some time to get the shipping world interested in that.