

Supply—Trade and Commerce

Mr. ROBB: On a basis of so much a season with a penalty clause. If they do not make the number of trips specified they are penalized.

Mr. BOYS: I mean comparing one service with another. The vote for one service is \$9,000, on another \$8,000, on another \$6,000 and so on.

Mr. ROBB: The services are arranged on a basis of getting the work done as cheaply as we can. The same contractors have been doing this work for a period of years; it is very seldom there is a change. Sometimes the contractor fails and we have to advertise for new tenders, or make the best arrangement possible in order to provide a service.

Mr. BOYS: Are the contracts for a period of years or yearly?

Mr. ROBB: These contracts are all signed each year and are subject to the vote of parliament.

Item agreed to.

Pelee Island and the mainland, steam service between, \$11,000.

Mr. BOYS: There ought to be lots of traffic there?

Mr. ROBB: Yes, there is some traffic there.

Mr. BOYS: That is where most of the Ontario native wine comes from, is it not?

Mr. ROBB: I am told it is very good wine.

Mr. BOYS: Oh, excellent.

Item agreed to.

Pictou, New Glasgow and Antigonish county ports schooner service between, \$1,500.

Mr. CHURCH: I understand that these vessels which get subsidies from the Dominion are privately owned and that there is no control over the rates which they charge. In view of the evidence which has been brought out before the commis-

11 p.m. sion which was inquiring into matters of shipping on the Great Lakes, is it the intention of the government to have these services and the rates charged by them placed under the control of the Railway Commission?

Mr. ROBB: In view of the subsidy granted by the government the contract provides that the rates charged shall be subject to the approval of the minister and the mails are carried free.

Item agreed to.

[Mr. Boys.]

Port Mulgrave, St. Peter's, Irish Cove and Marble Mountain, and other ports on the Bras d'Or lakes, steam service between, \$8,000.

Mr. CHURCH: Is it the intention of the government to do anything towards regulating the rates on water-borne traffic in the way of controlling passenger and freight rates on boats that receive a subsidy from the government? I think they should be under the control of some public body, such as the Railway Commission. Of course the boats running from Toronto to Niagara which charge such high rates for freight and passengers do not get a subsidy I admit, but other boats do receive a subsidy and I think there should be some control over boats doing government work, and even over boats not doing government work. There should be some public control over the freight and passenger rates of these ships but at present there is no control. An inquiry has been held recently in regard to the rates on the Great Lakes and it shows that the companies have been getting together and fixing rates and that a huge monopoly exists. I think the boats on the gulf and Atlantic coast that receive a subsidy should be under the control of some public body in regard to their rates; in fact whether they get a subsidy or not, I think their rates should be controlled. The time has come to place them under some control, so that the public shall not be held up by the high rates, both freight and passenger, charged to-day not only by the boats that receive subsidies but by those that do not. It might not be in the department of the minister who is in charge of these estimates but he might let us know what the government intends to do regarding this monopoly.

Mr. ROBB: There is some force in the argument of my hon. friend, but that matter comes under another department. We control the rates on the subsidized lines, and the other lines are not now under consideration.

Item agreed to.

Pictou, Souris and the Magdalen islands, steam service between, \$24,000.

Mr. BANCROFT: How many boats are employed on this line?

Mr. ROBB: The contractor for this service is the Magdalen Transport Limited. The contract was entered into in 1921, and runs from the opening of navigation in 1921 to the close of navigation in 1925, but this is one of the services that did not pay, and the contract was cancelled at the end of 1922 as the service did not comply with the tender and specifications. We invited tenders on the 16th March.