

heavy and distressing. Disaster after disaster occurred, apparently without end. It is difficult to account for these disasters, even now. Something was probably due to the heavy penalties imposed by the government for delaying the mails. The Straits of Belle Isle were often blocked with ice, and the currents changed with the winds, while the soundings were not to be trusted." ✓

It is no wonder that the Allans, who had suffered such severe losses, when speed was insisted on, demanded the insertion of the following clause in negotiating for a 20-knot service, in 1896:

"It is understood, however, that speed may be reduced during fogs, snow-storms, or tempests, or to avert danger in the vicinity of land, and dangers arising therefrom, shall not involve the contractors in penalty, nor be deemed a breach of contract."

With such a clause in the Fast Line contract by the Belle Isle, with the experience of shipping and the mail service on the route during the past three or four decades, it seems mere nonsense to talk of Canada having a 20-knot service. The clause protects the company and captains of the Fast Line boats in lying at anchor, as in the past, or in proceeding at any speed, from one knot upwards. ✓

The Allans have had long experience on the St. Lawrence route, and have always maintained that a twenty knot speed was impracticable and dangerous, owing to ice, land-bound waters, and fog. In their correspondence in the London Times on the Huddart Fast Line contract, 1894, they expressed their views very clearly.

The difficulties and hazards of the St. Lawrence for high speed are well-known to English capitalists, and this accounts for the failure of every attempt to raise the necessary funds to float a 20 knot, guaranteed speed. Samuel H. Fry, of London, tendering, in 1894, for a Canadian 20-knot service "Atlantic Steamship Line," (See Canadian Blue Book.) says: "I think the ports in Canada should be left for me to decide; if only to accelerate the despatch of the mails. In the summer, very often, dense fogs prevail in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, when it would be absolutely unsafe to run a steamer at 20 knots per hour. I have known the steamers of the Allan Line detained in the Straits of Belle Isle for two days by fogs and ice. What I would propose is, to load the steamers at Montreal and Quebec, and then sail or steam