

Our district here has passed through a very trying time, and the unemployment situation is acute. The only prospect we have of relieving this condition is in our lake operations; stoppage of this would be a catastrophe. The mills mentioned, the box factories and the fishing operations employ a great number of men, not only from the village of Winnipegosis but from the surrounding district.

Yours very truly,

C. L. White.

For many years Mr. White has been a resident of that district, and for some time has been mayor of the village. He is reliable, and from my personal knowledge I know the statements he makes in this letter are quite true.

Then, I have a letter under date of March 7, 1933, from the secretary of the Winnipegosis board of trade. It is as follows:

At a recent meeting of the Winnipegosis and district board of trade a resolution was unanimously passed that I be instructed to write you requesting that you do all in your power to have the Dominion government dredge at Winnipegosis kept in operation over the coming summer.

The water in lake Winnipegosis last year was lower than it has been for a number of years. It is impossible to navigate some of the channels of the lake without doing injury to boats propelled by steam power.

Yours respectfully,

W. S. Howatson,
Secretary.

Mr. Howatson with that letter forwarded to me a letter addressed by him under date of March 24, 1933, to Mr. F. G. Goodspeed, district engineer of the department of Public Works at Winnipeg, as follows:

Dear Sir,—

I have for acknowledgment your letter of the ninth instant with respect to the dredge on lake Winnipegosis. This has been placed before the board, and I have been instructed to place before you the following in regard thereto.

Lake operations last year—1932—would undoubtedly have been most difficult had the dredge not operated. As it was, the river and the approach channel were hardly passable during periods of south winds, as was instanced when the ss. Armenon had to lie outside on occasion and get use of the dredge tug to tow in her barge. In addition to this the dredge tug also had to be used in taking out of the river the same steamboat and equipment, as it was too dangerous to operate the steamboat through the shallower water. The result of this navigating this river and channel has put the ss. Armenon on the bank this winter for repairs, including a cracked stern bearing through wheel hitting bottom, and a broken shoe. If this had happened earlier in the season it would have tied up some fishing operations and resulted in lean times for certain residents.

This leads to the fact that this district practically wholly is dependent on the fishing

[Mr. Bowman.]

operations and other industries on lake Winnipegosis. Stoppage of operations through lack of a navigable channel out of this port will have a direct and serious effect on the livelihood of our residents.

I cannot too strongly endorse that statement, Mr. Chairman, Winnipegosis and the surrounding area probably has a population of 1,200 to 1,500 people, in addition to various settlements around the lake, and this population is practically wholly dependent on fishing operations and the perhaps lesser industries that are carried on on the lake. The letter continues:

Appreciating the serious financial situation at present existing the board feels that, although curtailment in dredge operations may be essential, some work must be done here.

May I point out that last year the dredging operations were shortened; they did not take up the whole summer season as in previous years, but were discontinued in the month of September.

The recommendation now is that your dredge operate along the river channel and outside channel for a reasonable portion of the season to make these channels safe for navigation. There is too much at risk with the residents of this district to withdraw all dredge operations.

Regarding the possibility of the water of the lake rising; in a normal year, with a normal rainfall, the lake rises with the spring inflow of water. The evaporation during the summer months offsets this rise. In the present season, wherein we have had a reasonable fall of snow, there will be some drainage into the lake, but owing to the fact that the land is so dry there will not be a normal inflow in our opinion. Against this is the natural decrease from evaporation during the summer, which may bring the water level to what it was last year, or even below that. Our opinion is that only an abnormally heavy rainfall can raise the lake to a safe, navigable level. Again leaving the future of our lake operations in the hands of nature and an anticipated heavy rainfall is too heavy a risk when the livelihood of a large number of people is at stake.

I would therefore request that you give the subject of operating the dredge here further consideration, advising me of your decision.

I think these two communications will indicate to the minister the real seriousness of closing down the operation of this dredge during the coming summer. The very fact that that dredge has been in operation for probably twenty-five or thirty years, and that it is now proposed to take it out of operation when the water is at the lowest level it has been for possibly forty or fifty years, indicates the seriousness of the situation. I trust that the minister will take these representations into serious consideration. It is not a minor matter; it involves as I have said, the interests of 1,200 to 1,500 people in the neighbour-