

Supply—Transport

question of internal management but one of operational service; and is one which should receive his serious consideration.

The services as performed by the Ontario Car Ferry Company are of vital importance to a wide area of central Ontario and a large part of New York state. For many years many tourists have entered Canada via the ferry and spread to all parts of Canada, particularly to all parts of central Ontario. We know they have left many thousands of dollars in Canada, and therefore at the present time are a source of much-needed United States dollars. I am sure other hon. members, particularly the hon. members for Hastings South, Peterborough West and Hastings-Peterborough, can bear witness to the fact that many tourists have entered their counties via the Ontario car ferry. Each summer many Americans make the pleasure trip across the lake and spend several hours ashore in Cobourg, spending many dollars in that town. The movement of freight by the ferry has been of great importance. Large quantities of pulpwood, newsprint, feldspar and such material pass from Canada to the United States, and large quantities of coal and salt proceed northward from the United States to Canada.

These boats performed a very vital function during the war and were on a twenty-four hour basis, both boats being in constant operation. In view of the valuable services that I have outlined it is not hard to imagine the anxiety with which the rumours have been heard in central Ontario. It is the considered opinion of the people in central Ontario that the management has been lacking in efficiency and in imagination.

The management is by remote control, with the traffic manager living in Montreal and coming to Cobourg about once a month. I understand that between \$75 and \$100 a month is spent on telephone calls to contact the traffic manager about various problems.

No effort has been made to secure new business, certainly not in the area which these boats serve. I think we could expect that signs of any such effort would be seen in that community. Much of the hard coal can be brought into central Ontario by the ferry if an effort by the management were made to secure this business. Many of the coal dealers in these areas have indicated their willingness to co-operate if any effort were made by the management to secure the business. We know that two of the large consumers of industrial coal in Cobourg bring their coal to that town by car ferry, having found it the cheapest and most efficient route. They are quite concerned regarding the possibility of discontinuance of this service, and they say that if such happens they

[Mr. Robertson.]

will bring their coal in by their own boats, and therefore the railroads will lose this revenue.

I think it is reasonable to conclude that if these two large users of industrial coal find it profitable to do so, other industries in this area could be induced to do so if any effort were made by the management to secure this business. We know that large quantities of pulpwood proceed from Canada to the United States via the ferry. I think this business will continue in good volume. We do know that during last spring this volume of business fell off, largely owing to a strike in a factory in the United States which used this pulpwood. We can conclude that this is probably one of the reasons for the present deficit, and that it would be much less in the future.

It is our belief that the passenger service on these boats could be increased greatly. By proper advertising more people would be induced to travel by the ferry. We have had numerous excursions on these boats in the past, but at the present time little effort is made to secure this business. We have been told that a certain club in our town decided against holding an excursion simply because no effort was made by the management to secure this business.

The ferries are advertised as automobile transports, yet we know that any automobiles that are transported by this route have to be on hand about two hours before sailing time, and quite often people who have a reservation come to this area and find that there is no space available for their automobiles to take them to the United States. Certainly that is a definite sign that there is inefficient management.

We are informed by the Canadian National Railways that because of the operating deficit these boats must be removed. It is hard to get figures to correspond as to what this operating deficit is. I have had information from three sources, two of which are the Canadian National Railways and the Baltimore and Ohio Railway, and none of them correspond. It seems to me to be a most unusual fact that they cannot agree on what the deficit is. In view of the increased business which could be secured by proper management I do not believe the figures they quote are sufficient to warrant the discontinuance of this service.

It is also very difficult for us to understand why a service which in past years has justified the use of two boats should suddenly find itself in the position where there is not enough business for one boat.

A study of the carloadings of these ferries is very instructive. We find that business is as good today as it was a year ago on all