

SASKATCHEWAN'S PUBLIC FERRY SERVICE

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THERE are 42 ferry crossings in Saskatchewan; all of these are important links in the main road system of that province. The ferries are operated by the Department of Highways and are free during daylight hours; they are accessible after dark, but a toll is then charged by the ferry-men.

In the pre-Rebellion days, a few scows were operated by the Indians and half-breeds at three or four of the main crossings, and under the government of the North-West Territories these crossings were brought under recognition and the ferrymen received licenses to operate at a fixed rate of tolls. When the provincial government assumed control in 1905, this system was superseded by establishing

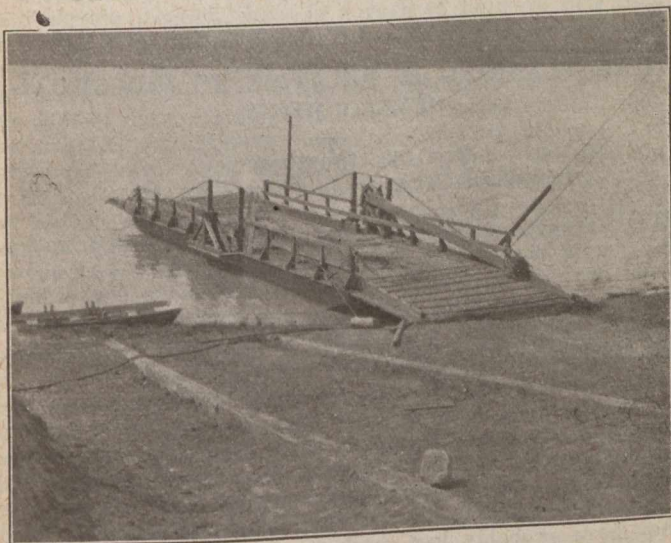


FIG. 1—STANDARD SASKATCHEWAN FERRY SCOW

paid ferrymen at all new crossings, the old licenses being gradually eliminated, and in 1912 a system of free ferriage was established, the ferry service was unified and the scows and tackle of all crossings were brought to a government standard.

The growth of the ferry traffic from an occasional rancher's rig or pioneer's cart to the present-day heavily loaded grain tank, drawn by six horses or moved by motor power, and automobile traffic, reflects the short and rapid history of the development of the agricultural and cattle industry in Saskatchewan.

A comparison of the units of traffic carried by this ferry service for the last three years is interesting:—

Year 1916	127,677	
" 1917	465,822	"
" 1918	604,027	"



FIG. 2—SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER

Also the comparison between the decline of the wagon traffic and the increase of the automobile traffic:—

		Wagons.	Automobiles.
Year 1916	122,677	25,738	
" 1917	107,270	60,386	
" 1918	111,770	103,928	

There are required for Saskatchewan's ferry service 61 standard scows and 61 rowboats; 102,000 ft. of 1¼-in. steel

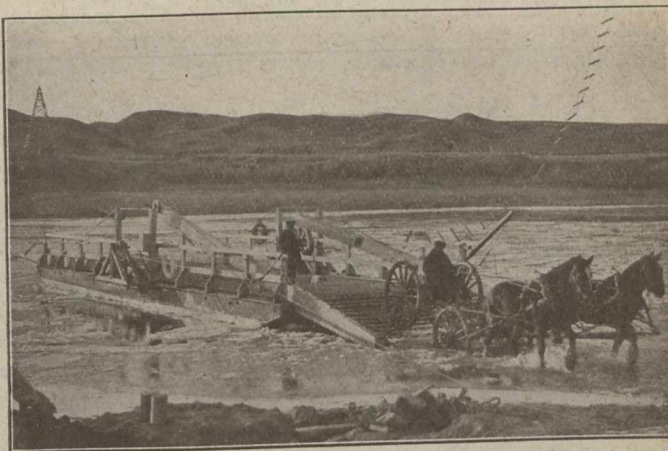


FIG. 3—ICE MAKES LANDING DIFFICULT

cable for the main cables suspended from towers on the river banks, and upon which cable the scow travellers run; 48,000 ft. of ¾-in. steel cable for temporary crossings when the channel at the main cables becomes obstructed by moving sandbars; and 90,000 ft. of ¾-in. steel cable. This small cable passes from the shore to the scow and is reeled on a winch to enable the ferryman to pass stretches of slack water in places where the current forms eddies which do not promote the progress of the scow.

The ferry season commences about the middle of April, and closes when the rivers are so choked with ice as to



FIG. 4—STRAW ROAD ACROSS SANDBAR

render it dangerous to cross; this occurs any time from the end of October to the first of December.

The service last season cost the government \$120,000, this sum covering the ferrymen's wages, new construction, renewals of scows and cables and tackle, and the maintenance of the approaches to the ferries. In connection with the latter item, approximately 6,000 lineal yards of road were built and maintained during low water, and for the consolidation of sandbars some 350 tons of straw and litter were hauled, with an average haul of three miles.