

to what we now have. One hon. gentleman has asked what is the average speed maintained by the steamers. The average speed of the 'Tunisian' was 13 7-10 knots, the 'Parisian' 13 3-10 knots, the 'Bavarian' 13 3-10 knots and the 'Ionian' 13-6 knots. I think the hon. leader of the opposition (Mr. Borden, Halifax) asked me a question in regard to the distances. The distance between Merville and Rimouski, via Cape Race, is 2,455 miles, and between Merville and Halifax, via Cape Race, 2,254 miles. My hon. friend beside me (Hon. Mr. Tarte) was inquiring how many of these trips had been made in less than seven days. There were eight trips made under seven days. The majority of them were above seven.

Hon. Mr. TARTE. We have fast steamers leaving almost daily from New York and other American ports, and for a good many years to come we will be obliged to use the American route on that account, but all the same it is most desirable that we should build up our Canadian route as fast as we can.

Mr. COCHRANE. No one is disputing that fact.

Hon. Mr. TARTE. I know, but there may be some hon. gentlemen who are not as kindly disposed towards the St. Lawrence route as I am.

Mr. MACLEAN. I believe that the line of the fast service between America and Europe is from a Canadian port to a British port, and that if we had the courage to establish a fast passenger express across the Atlantic we would get all the American traffic to come our way, and instead of paying tribute to them, the American people would be paying tribute to us. But it wants a government of courage who will settle the matter at once and for all. It may be a comparatively large expenditure at the outset, but it can be financed, and it will go a long way towards elevating Canada in the eyes of Europe. I have given some attention to the matter, and the idea now is that an express boat on the Atlantic is not a great big boat of 10,000 tons, but probably one of 5,000 tons, constructed for the express purpose of making the trip in the shortest possible time. We have the most contiguous ports to Britain, and we should make some effort to establish this fast service. We have been at it for years and years, and we are further away from it now than ever before. Probably the port of Sydney would be the nearest port, or there may be a port in Newfoundland from which the Atlantic could be crossed in two days by these new turbine steamers. The question must be taken up by the government in a courageous way if we are to have this fast express service. I believe the government should try to solve the question at the earliest possible moment on some such line as I have suggested.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. The weight despatched by the Allan Line steamers from the 1st of April, 1902, to 1st of March, 1903, was: letters, and post cards, 7,330 pounds; other matter, 60,795 pounds; in all, 68,089 pounds. I have made inquiry at the post office with reference to the weight coming the other way, and I have been informed that it is not customary to weigh mails exchanged between countries of the postal union, except when it becomes necessary to obtain the weights for statistical purposes. No record has been kept of the weight of mails despatched to Canada from the United Kingdom, and unless the British office has done so for its own information it cannot be obtained.

Mr. CLARKE. Does that mean that the total mail matter carried for 12 months from Canada to Great Britain would be only 34 tons?

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. Thirty-five tons, to be correct.

Mr. CLARKE. Probably there would be half that much coming this way.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. Very likely.

Mr. CLARKE. And we are paying \$150,000 a year for that privilege?

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. Yes. If the House likes to abolish the service, of course, it is in its power to do so, but that would probably be very inconvenient for our friends in the maritime provinces.

Mr. CLARKE. We have no desire to inconvenience our friends in the maritime provinces, but we are most anxious that this service shall be improved and accelerated.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. Well, it is a question of cost.

Mr. CLARKE. By the way, there was a very elegant model of a bottle-necked steamer out in the lobby for some years; what has become of it?

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. I think it was returned to Mr. Petersen along with his deposit.

Mr. CLARKE. And the interest.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. Yes.

Mr. COCHRANE. Did you test the ball-bearing apparatus on it before you returned it?

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). I desire to ask the Minister of Agriculture if he has given any consideration to the question of freight rates on commodities between Canadian centres and British centres. The American government furnishes the rate of all classes of commodities over all lines to and