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EXTRACT OF THE REPORT OF J. S. BYRON TO THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY IN CONNECTION WITH THE EQUIPMENT OF THE STEAMERS - BRITISH COLUMBIA LAKE AND RIVER SERVICE 1918

I. OKANAGAN LAKE

(1) Steamer SICAMOUS:

This steamer performs a daily service, except Sunday, between Okanagan Landing and Penticton - a direct distance of 65 miles. She has 15 intermediate calls, which brings the distance up to 90 miles each way, if she makes all the calls, making a long day's work for this steamer and its crew, as she sails from Penticton at 5:30 a.m. and does not return any day beofre 7;15 p.m., but it is oftener after 8 and 9 p.m.

The Sicamous is built of steel and is four years old. I found her repair condition generally in all departments good. She carries a crew of Captain, Mate and nine deckhands, including the watchman, 2 engineers, 3 firemen, 2 coal passers, purser, freight clerk, chief steward and ten assistants (including cooks), and I am of the opinion that she is not over manned, wxcept perhaps in the steward's and engineer's departments. Three firemen and two coal passers do not seem necessary although steam is kept on the boat all night. In the matter of deckhands: the officers are having a hard time to get along as labour is scarce on account of the "Flu" epidemic, in fact, the vessel has been running shorthanded in this department for some time.

It appears to me that this steamer has not sufficient time to load freight at Okanagan Landing - half of the deckhands are employed loading coal all the time she is lying there - and a longshore gang has to be furnished, which is an expense and would be unnecessary if proper loading facilities were available.

If it could be arranged for this steamer to burn oil, it would mean that when loading freight she would get the full benefit of her entire crew, further, the reduction of one fireman and two coal passers could be made from the engineer's staff, besides the cost of their board. A saving of paint and cleaning material would also be effected in the deck department, which is an important item of expense; the canvas decks would be protected from soot and cinders and the life of the steamer greatly increased.

The Superintendent Engineer informs me that her boilers and engines are in good condition, and the steamer was as clean around decks as could be expected, being shorthanded.

(2) Steamer OKANAGAN

This steamer is laid up at present, and is only used in the summer season, carrying fruit. She has very good passenger and freight accommodation and could handle the business offering at this season of the year very nicely. She burns almost as much fuel however, as the Sicamous so the only economy in running her now would be in the reduction of firemen, and should any ice be encountered it would not be advisable to operate her, as she is built of wood, but with good care she can be made to last for the next five years without any large repairs.

The Superintendent Engineer reports her boilers and engines in good repair. She was built in 1907 and had an extra overhaul in 1915, and is in good shape in all departments. If oil were put into the Sicamous, I would suggest it also be installed in this steamer, for one reason, coal firemen are hard to get in the summer season and the enginnaers cannot get stuck for want of men when using oil fuel. Besides, there should be a saving in burning oil and there would be the usual reduction in the engineer's staff.

She is taken care of at the wharf by a watchman, who looks after all the floating equipment laid up, as well as the shipyard and buildings.

(3) Tug boat CASTLEGAR:

This boat is laid up at the present itme but is in commission all summer, and can be used as a spare or emergency boat in the winter season. She is built of wood, and is in splendid condition in the engine room and on deck, insofar as repairs go, with the exception of her bulwards which will have to be renewed before she goes into commission again.

She was built in 1910 and with the ordinary wear and tear repairs should be good for the next five years. The Superintendent Engineer reports her boilers and engines in good condition.

(4) Tug boat NARAMATA:

This boat was built of steel in 1914 and is employed twwing barges between Penticton and Okanagan Landing. he is in first class condition of repair throughout and is well fitted for the work she is now doing, and will last a number of years without much expense to the company.

She carries a crew of Captain, one mate, pilot in the fruit season, two deck-hands, two enginners, two firemen, one barge man, one steward and cook combined - ten men in all, which are necessary to handle the lines on these barges. The Superintendent Engineer reports his department in good order.

(5) Steamer YORK:

This boat has not been in service for two years, is built of steel, but is of no use to the Company whatsoever on the Okanagan Lake. I understand she has done twwing, but she is of very light draught and it would seem to me a crime to allow her to handle the barge equipment, as there most certainly would be a bad accident if she got caught in a strong breeze of wind, not having power enough to take care of any kind of a tow either alongside or astern of her.

She is in very good condition and Captain Brown is of the opinion that she should be disposed of, which I heartily concur. In talking with some people at Sicamous, it was thought that a small boat might hake a living on Shuswap Lake. The York is built in three sections and could be moved an put together again without difficulty. As you are aware there is considerable tourist business around Sicamous, so she might be leased or operated in developing business such as carrying tourists, fishing parties, etc., on Shuswap Lake.

The Superintendent Engineer reports her boilers, hull and engine in good repair and she could be fitted up into a nice little freight and passenger steamer and operated very cheaply with a Captain and an engineer, but if we have no place to put her, she should be sold as she is only getting ruined laying on the beach at Okanagan Landing.

(6) & (7) The condemned steamers Aberdeen and Kaleden:

These steamers are now being dismantled and the engines are being sent to Vancouver shops. The boiler of the Aberdeen is being put in the shipyard at Nelson, replacing an old one, and the boilder of the Kaleden is being placed in the shipyard at Okanagan Landing, as the one there is in bad shape and anyhow it was altogether too large for its purpose, which meant a great waste of fuel.

The hulls of these steamers are entirely gone, but the proposition of salving the deck houses has come up, as they might be used in the fruit season at Kelowna, as it is proposed with the way business is increasing to run the steamer Okanagan night and day. To do this, of course, it will be necessary to have two crews and the most satisfactory place to put a bunkhouse would be about Kelowna, which is situated about half way between Okanagan Landing and Penticton, insofar as the business is concerned.

The Superintendent Engineer is looking after the engines and other machinery parts belonging to his department and the Master Builder is removing all the hog chains and spare fittings as quite a lot of this gear can be used in connection with the building and re-fitting of steamers and barges.

II. ARROW LAKES

(1) Steamer BONNINGTON:

This steamer is built of steel and was launched in 1911. Some carpenter work in the way of deck sheathing and repairs to guards will be required, but she is in good repair otherwise with the exception of painting and I figure $1,500 will put her in the pink of condition to commence work in the Spring. The Superintendent Engineer reports her boilers, engines and other machinery in good working order.

This steamer would also make a good showing towards decreasing her expenses by using oil fuel and whn running musters about the same number of hands in her crew as the Sicamous, so that a saving in the engineer staff would be about equal, insofar as fuel and labour is concerned,she is not pressed so hard for time at Arrowhead where she coals. When in commission she runs between Arrowhead and Robson, calling at intermediate ports - a distance of 133 miles each way - and a trip is made one way every day except Sunday. At present she is laid up and anchored off the Bay in Nakusp well protected and looked after by watchmen who also take charge of all the other floating equipment and the buildings and shipyard at Nakusp.

(2) Steamer MINTO:

This vessel is operating between Arrowhead and Robson calling at intermediate points. She is a steel composite build and quite capable of handling ice conditions. She has just replaced the steamer Bonnington after having a good overhaul in all departments and she is in perfect condition insofar as her hull and housework are concerned. Her boiler, however, is tender and she gives some trouble with her tubes, as the boiler is now over twenty years old, having been built in 1898.

Her crew consists of a captain, pilot, mate and nine deckhands including the watchman, two engineers, three firemen and two coal passers, purser and freight clerk, chief steward and eleven assistants, including cooks and watchmen. On the trip from Arrowhead to Robson she is hard pressed for time and eight deckhands are really necessary. In the engineer's department it seems to me they should do with one less coal passer, although she is under steam the full 24 hours. The steward's department should get along with ten assistants and the chief steward at least for the winter months. The interior of the steamer and the steward's equipment generally were in good order.

If oil were installed in the Bonnington it should be put in this boat also, as she is without exception the hardest steamer to keep clean in the entire fleet, and an hour or so after she sails from Arrowhead where she is thoroughly washed down, she is dirty from soot and cinders - in fact it is simply impossible to keep her clean on deck and when the weather is extremely cold and she cannot be washed down for days you can imagine the filthy condition she gets into. There would be about the same saving in salaries as on the Bonnington besides the economy in the consumption of oil fuel over coal. The Company has oil tanks at Revelstoke and the Arrow Lakes seem to be essentially a steamboat proposition so if oil can be procured at a reasonable cost and the expense of building the tanks at Arrowhead is not prohibitive with the present cost of steel plate it would effect quite a saving.

(3) Steamer KOOTENAY:

This steamer was built of wood in 1896, she has had several overhauls and is now pretty well used up in all departments and not worth spending any more money on.

She is used as a spare boat and with care and no regular run will last for a few years. She is capable of handling and filling in on the Arrow Lakes service, and, if any accident should befall the Minto, thereby protecting us from having to use the Bonnington, which would cause a big expense to operate her between Arrowhead and Burton City in the winter season. The Kootenay is a very handy steamer and the Superintendent Engineer states that she will last for quite a few years as a spare boat insofar as her boiler is concerned, her engines are in good condition, but her hull is getting water-logged. Her house and passenger accomodation is in very fair shape.

(4) Tug boat WHATSHAN:

This vessel is built of wood and went into service in 1909. In the winter months when the water in the narrows between the two lakes is frozen over, she is employed between Robson and Needles carrying freight and passengers. She has a comfortable cabin aft for passengers with other conveniences and is quite suitable for that business. At present she is engaged towing barges loaded with lumber, ore and fruit on the lower Arrow Lake and is manned by a captain and engineer. They do any cooking that is required for themselves and she is in readiness to take care of the passenger business if the water gets too low in the narrows.

This boat's hull is getting tender, but she is good for a couple of years' work yet before an overhaul. The Superintendent Engineer reports her boilers and engine in good condition.

(5) Condemned tug boat COLUMBIA:

This boat was built in 1896 and was used in towing car barges on the Arrow Lakes between Arrowhead and Nakusp before the construction of the Crows Nest and Kettle Valley Railways. She has been condemned by the Government Inspectors and is not worth spending any money on insofar as this Company is concerned. She could be patched up both in hull and boiler and her engines are good, but if possible she should be sold as she stands now. She is out on the ways and probably some of the saw mill companies would buy her and patch her up for towing log booms on the lakes.

III. TROUT LAKE

(1) Steamer PROCTOR:

This little boat is leased to some parties and running between Gerrard and Trout Lake City. She was built of wood in 1900, is 65 feet long with a beam of 14' 4" and a depth of 5'2". I did not see her on this trip but know her and after talking matters over with the Master Builder at Nelson, he informs me that it would take about $600 to put her hull in shape and the Superintendent Engineer states her boiler is in poor condition.

Under the circumstances I would recommend we do not undertake to make any further repairs to this boat; she is only making a scant living where she is running and would be of no value to us on any of the other lakes. The best possible thing to do would be to sell her as she stands now.

IV. SLOCAN LAKE

(1) Steamer SLOCAN:

This steamer was built of wood in 1905, but was overhauled and practically rebuilt in 1912. This year she was given a refit and I found her repair condition good in all departments.

She makes the run between Rosebery and Slocan City calling at intermediate ports. The distance is about 24 miles and three days each week she makes two round trips. On the other days she makes one round trip, laying over on Sundays. She carries a crew of a Captain, one mate, and five deck hands, including the watchman, two engineers, two firemen and one coal passer, one chief steward, and three assistants which include cooks, and one purser. The boat is not over-manned as she is a difficult job to keep clean. I can assure you that this steamer is in a much better condition in every department than she was the last time I looked over this fleet nearly three years ago. she had an overhaul this summer and with care, which she is getting now, should last for the next five years without much money having to be spent on her outside of the regular yearly cleanup. The Superintendent Engineer reports her boilers and engines in good repair. The boiler, of course, is getting tender, but as there is no reason for having to push her for speed, the boiler will last as long as the boat.

(2) Tug boat SANDON:

This vessel was built in 1898, was refitted in 1912 and again overhauled this year. She is in a first-class condition of repair and should go for the next five years with very little repairs of any kind. Her work is towing car barges between the mine slips and the ports of Rosebery and Slocan City. She is well adapted for this work. Again, she is able to take the steamer Slocan's place when necessary, in fact this summer while the Slocan was being overhauled, she took the run and was fairly satisfactory as a passenger steamer. Her passenger accomodation consists of a cabin aft with other conveniences which make her quite comfortable.

She carries a crew comprising one Captain, one mate, two deck hands, one engineer, two firemen, one cook and steward combined, and has not too many men in her crew as the steward has to do his bit when they are handling the barges, particularly when it is blowing, and you can understand it is extremely difficult work handling frozen ropes and cables at this time of the year. Our Superintendent Engineer reports her boilers and engines in first-class condition.

V. KOOTENAY LAKE

(1) Steamer NASOOKIN:

This vessel is built of steel and was placed in service in 1913. She is in good repair in all departments and outside of the usual clean up in the spring and ordinary wear and tear repairs will not cost any money for refitting for years. She has plenty of time to do her work and is not pushed in regard to speed, so that there is no undue strain on her boilers or engine and the Superintendent Engineer reports all her machinery in first-class condition and she was by far the best kept steamer I saw in all departments in the fleet. She carries a crew consisting of a Captain, mate, and nine deckhands including the watchman, two engineers, three firement and one coal passer, purser and freight clerk, chief steward and ten assistants including cooks. At least one hand might be cut out of the steward's department. The deck crew is small enough and the engineer's staff seemed suffieient. This boat is doing hardly as much work as the Bonnington and Sicamous and is carrying one less coal passer.

(2) Steamer KUSKANOOK:

This steamer was built of wood in 1906 and was practically reconstructed in 1911. Since then various large sums of money have been spent on her in repair and at present she is in a very good condition and should run for at least three years with the ordinary spring overhaul.

The steamer makes a round trip between Kaslo and Nelson every day except Sunday. The distance is 54 miles and she calls at quite a few intermediate ports, so that she travels on an average about 120 miles each day. The crew consists of a Captain, mate, eight deck hands including the watchman, a purser, and freight clerk, two engineers, two firemen, one coal passer, chief steward and ten assistants which includes cooks. I do not consider her over-manned except in the steward's department, but I understand they were reduced by two assistants while I was in Nelson. Superintendent Engineer informs me that her boiler and machinery are in good running order. In the other departments she was clean and all her equipment was in good shape.

(3) Steamer MOYIE:

This vessel was built in 1898 and is of composite construction. She has been refitted twice, the last time in 1909. She is in a very run down condition and requires an extensive overhaul which will cost approximately $8,000 to $10,000 as it is one of those overhaul jobs you can never figure the cost of until you get into her timbers. She could be made to run by spending a couple of thousand dollars on her and would probably last 2 years, but after going into the matter carefully when through with her inspection, we figured it would be only throwing money away to fix her up temporarily, and would advise that she have a general overhaul as soon as time will permit. She is a good type of boat with excellent passenger accomodation and a spacious freight deck. At present she is running between Crawford Bay and Nelson, and does the general freighting of ore etc. around the Lake. The Superintendent Engineer is inclined to believe that if certain reparis were made to her boiler it would last for the next ten years, but as the boiler is now over 20 years old, I am inclined to believe we should have the opinion of our boiler expert and perhaps he might know of a second hand boiler that could be placed in this steamer if he did not consider her present boiler worth spending any money on. It is absolutely necessary for us to have a steamer of her class available, the only question being should we spend $2,000 on her now or make a good job by giving her a thorough overhaul. Her present crew consists of a Captain, one mate, seven deckhands including watchman, one engineer, two firemen, one purser, and one man in the steward department.

(4) Steamer KOKANEE:

This steamer was built in 1896 and has been refitted on two occasions. She is laid up at present, but can be got out under steam very shortly if required to relieve any of the passenger boats. She is in fair condition in all departments and with care and work that will not require her to be driven she is good for a few years. The Superintendent Engineer reports her boiler in fair shape and her engines and other machinery in good order.

The equipment in the steward's department appeared to me was not receiving the attention it should on laid up steamers. I noticed some of the galley ranges were rusting out and should be oiled. Again, both soiled and clean linen was still on a number of the beds in the staterooms.

(5) Tug boat YMIR:

This boat was built in 1899 and has been refitted, in fact practically reconstructed since she was built first. Her condition at present in all departments is fairly good and she should last for a few years without any great amount of money having to be spent on her for repairs. She is tied up at Nelson but is used as a spare boat. The crew from whatever steamer she is replacing takes her over so that there is no expense while she is laying along side the dock. One watchman takes care of her and the other steamers that are laid up as well as the shipyard.

(6) Tug boat VALHALLA:

This vessel is engaged towing barges between Proctor and Kootenay Landing. She was built of wood in 1901 and was practically rebuilt again in 1912. Somemoney was also spent on her hull in 1914, and today she is in need of repairs which will cost in the neighbourhood of $4,000. Then it is a question if she would be good for more than three years. Her crew consists of a Captain, pilot, mate and two deckhands, two engineers, two firemen, and one man in the steward's department. This boat makes a round trip nearly every day, and I do not consider her over-manned in any department.

(7) Tug boat HOSMER:

The Hosmer was built of wood in 1909 and is engaged with the Valhalla towing barges between Proctor and Kootenay Landing. She has had no overhaul since she was built and should receive hull attention and probably will require new decks next year. It will take approximately $6,500 ti oyt ger ub sgaoem when she should be good for at least five years. She carries the same crew as the Valhalla and does exactly the same work. Her boiler is in good repair, but her shaft is bent and will have to be straightened out when she gets her overhaul.

GENERAL REMARKS

The steamers Bonnington, Sicamous and Nasookin are possibly today the finest passenger steamers of their build afloat and their public rooms such as the smoking, dining, and ladies babins are bright, airy and most comfortable, but the accommodation in the staterooms is the same as it was when I joined Captain Troup in the Kootenays in 1894. The amount of money spent in purchasing the movable wash basins, water pitchers, slop jars, and soap dishes would have furnished a permanent wash stand and it would not be such a great expense to lay on a supply of hot and cold water. There is plenty of heating surface around the smoke stack to supply all the hot water required so when the cost of pipe eases off I would recommend this work be done on the three steamers mentioned as they are the boats the tourists will travel on.

The steamer' dining saloons have a bare look and a few buckets with small trees might be placed around all the saloons on the steamers Bonnington, Sicamous and Nasookin. There are plenty small trees and beautiful foliage around the lakes which could be used on the tables and appeal to passengers more than hot house flowers. These are small matters which may not amount to much but it is the little things that count and help to advertise the service at no great expense. The stewards' crews have plenty of time to arrange all these details.

The engine rooms of all the passenger steamers were clean and the machinery beautifully kept and working well, no steam pipe leakages to speak of were noticeable and the engines were all running at economical speeds. On the tow boats the engines were not clean and the engine rooms had a very neglected appearance. On the tow boats generally I would recommend their condition be improved. They all need painting both inside and outside. The outside of course need not be painted before spring, but when they are painted they should be kept up in all departments as their appearance is not up to Canadian Pacific standards. We have got to allow, however, for sickness which may account for a percentage of their present condition.

There does not seem to have been much consideration given steel in the building of barges, tow boats and steamers in former years when steel was comparatively cheap. The life of wooden craft on the lakes is so short that it would be well in future to figure on steel for all new work. The life of a steel boat or barge would be from thirty to forty years if taken care of, whereas wooden vessels are a continual source of expense after the first five years. With the present floating equipment and the addition of the new barge building at Nelson and a proposed new barge on Okanagan Lake, the fleet should not require any heavy repairs other than I have already shown for about five years. In the meantime it would be well to let this wooden fleet all rot out as near as possible about the same time and replace with steel which no doubt will be cheaper than it is at present.