

*Canadian National Railways*

enterprise. I should like to know whether this is the proper place to ask to have that gone into—because unless there is some other place, I think the matter should be gone into here. I do not think we should just take these accounts without questions of any kind. I am asking now whether this is the proper time, in view of the fact, as the member for Rosedale points out, that what we do here really approves the operation of T.C.A., whatever it may be. Is this the proper place, as perhaps it is the only time we shall have to ask questions of importance about the operations of T.C.A.?

It is suggested that the matter may be discussed under the estimates of the Minister of Reconstruction and Supply, but I am not sure about that. I do not remember its coming up in the transport estimates, and it is certainly before us now. I do not want to relinquish an opportunity of asking questions here unless it is quite clear that the opportunity will present itself elsewhere.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: This resolution, of course, deals only with financial obligations. I do not think the operations of the railways would be considered under the Minister of Finance.

Mr. KNOWLES: On the point of order, Mr. Chairman, I suggest that it might be done under the estimates of the Minister of Reconstruction and Supply. I make that suggestion partly because I believe it would be more in order at that time, and also because it might be more satisfactory to discuss the phases of the matter brought up by the hon. member when we have that minister before us rather than the minister or assistant in charge of the Department of Finance. It is true there is no specific item in the estimates relating to Trans-Canada Air Lines, but it is also clear by the order in council that was tabled that the Minister of Reconstruction and Supply, or the Minister of Trade and Commerce—the same gentleman in either case—is the minister in charge of Trans-Canada Air Lines and responsible on its behalf to parliament. I suggest that either on the item for general administration of trade and commerce, or on the item for general administration of reconstruction and supply, it would be in order, and it would be more satisfactory, because the appropriate minister would be then before us.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member is correct in his suggestion.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): I agree with the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre that it would be more convenient then, but I want to be sure that we shall not be told eventually that we have missed the bus.

[Mr. Macdonnell (Muskoka-Ontario).]

Mr. LENNARD: This resolution seeks authority to give financial aid and assistance to other companies of the national system. Apart from the Canadian National Steamships, not mentioned here, what companies are there?

Mr. BELZILE: In the 1947 annual report of the Canadian National Railways on pages 22 and 23, there is a long list of the companies that are owned by the Canadian National Railway system.

Mr. LENNARD: I think that list should be on the record.

Mr. BELZILE: It is always available to the public.

Mr. LENNARD: But it is not read. It should be in *Hansard*.

Mr. BRACKEN: Mr. Chairman, in the middle of this resolution there appear the following words:

... with authority to give financial aid and assistance to other companies of the said national system and to authorize the Minister of Finance to place at the disposal of the national company or the Trans-Canada Air Lines, such amounts as may be necessary to enable them to pay operating and income charges if at any time in any year the available revenues of the national railway system or the Trans-Canada Air Lines and subsidiaries, respectively, are not sufficient to pay such charges.

What that means is that we are giving power to the government to pay the deficits of these institutions. The point I wish to make is that this clause gives the power to pay these deficits "if at any time in any year" there are deficits. I submit that this committee ought not to pass a measure with the latter part of that clause in it. If the government, by a blank cheque method, is to guarantee the deficits of these institutions, as it will probably have to do, I submit that the accounts of those institutions ought to come before parliament every year. I submit that the matter should not just come before us in some general way under some minister's estimates where there is no specific item dealing with it. The government ought to have no long-term powers in this form. It may be that the time to deal with this matter is when we get to the bill, although I am wondering if we ought not to move in this committee that those words "in any year" be deleted. I do not like to propose amendments without careful consideration, but if we do not do it here I propose to have it done later on.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Perhaps the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance will repeat what he said with regard to these deficits and their having to come before parliament.