

Supply—Transport

Mr. Fisher: It seems to me the minister has indicated that the board, in making this survey, has some kind of a planning function. Could he give us any indication as to how his advisers on air matters are working at present in order to relate the total air picture to the regional studies being made? I know that is a very general question, but this will have to fit into a national scale of expenditure in terms of the provision of facilities. In other words, we might be trying to do too much in too many places at the same time.

Could the minister give us any indication to the effect that after these reports are made available to him we are likely to have a new kind of over-all air line policy from the government? I am not particularly fishing with an eye on the election, or anything like that. I would really like to know whether in a year, 18 months or two years the department will have the information and the plans so that not only the nation but even the regions and towns will know where they fit into the general scheme of things in air matters.

Mr. Balcer: As I said earlier, the air transport board has been directed by the Minister of Transport to make this survey and hold these hearings all across Canada. As soon as they have finished with their work, which I imagine will be in a couple of months' time, they will report to the minister. The minister will then consider their recommendations, and it will be up to the government to decide what part of the recommendations will be implemented. At the present time regional carriers are performing functions and rendering services. The air transport board hold hearings and makes decisions on various regional services. When they have completed this inquiry across the country, they have been asked by myself to make a report, and that report will certainly have its effect on the future policy on the matter of regional carriers. As far as the relationship between the policy on regional carriers and the over-all aviation policy of the government is concerned, this is a matter for the decision of the government when the report is before them.

(Translation):

Mr. Brassard (Lapointe): Mr. Chairman, I should like to put a brief question to the Minister of Transport concerning the government grant requested by the Quebecair company. Could the minister tell the house if he held discussions with T.C.A. representatives with regard to the possible withdrawal of

that crown company from Saguenay airport, better known under the name of Bagotville?

Mr. Balcer: Mr. Chairman, I am constantly in touch with T.C.A. representatives regarding all matters likely to interest my department in its relations with that company. With regard to my friend's question, I wish to tell him that this matter was discussed on several occasions.

Mr. Brassard (Lapointe): Mr. Chairman, can the minister give us the assurance that T.C.A. will continue to serve the Saguenay district?

Mr. Balcer: Mr. Chairman, no change is expected at present as concerns that service.

Mr. Bourget: Mr. Chairman, as far as I am concerned, I have one last question to ask the minister.

So that everyone may understand what has happened in connection with air mail service, could the minister tell the house the amount of the contract passed between Pacific Western Airlines and the Post Office Department?

In addition, could the minister tell the house how much it costs the Post Office Department to carry the mail following the adoption of the present means of transportation?

Mr. Balcer: Mr. Chairman, my hon. friend will have to wait until Monday to ask the Postmaster General (Mr. Hamilton) that question because I do not have the information he requests. Only the Post Office Department can provide that information.

As far as we are concerned, the people of that area came to us and said: "Listen, we no longer have any air service and we need one." That is why we have paid a subsidy.

Mr. Bourget: Mr. Chairman, I think the minister must realize that the questions I am directing to him are very important, because we shall know whether or not the government was justified in making that change.

Not having the required figures at hand concerning those two air mail transport contracts, we cannot tell the difference between the two. I am not asking the minister to reply right away, since he said he did not have those figures at hand, but we shall probably have the opportunity, when we consider other supplementary estimates, to get a reply from the minister in order that we may know the difference between the costs in transportation.

(Text):

Item agreed to.

St. Lawrence seaway authority—

666. Operating deficit and capital requirements of canals and works entrusted to the St. Lawrence seaway authority—further amount required, \$1,291,400.