

two railways. Many of us have been importuned from different sources, apparently with justice from the point of view of service to the country and the public along the lines of these railways. The Minister of Railways placed the proposition soundly and squarely before the House when he said that the basis of awarding these contracts should be primarily upon the service which these railway companies give to the people concerned in the mail services. Has the minister under consideration and does he intend to alter the distribution of contracts in such a manner as to conform with the basis of service that I have indicated and, at the same time, to give greater consideration, particularly in the western portion of Canada, to the Canadian National Railways?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): There is at the moment going on in the Post Office Department a thorough investigation. It is true that the Canadian Pacific, being the first railway on the ground, enjoyed the privilege of carrying the mails

3 a.m. across Canada. As my hon.

friend knows, they have an excellent transcontinental service and naturally the older settled districts and towns are on that railway. Although they have less mileage, their mail business is greater in volume than that of the Canadian National. We have, however, our own Canadian National Railways, and just as I am anxious to build up our park system in order to encourage tourist traffic on the Canadian National, the same attention will be paid to the mail service. The departmental officials inform me that from a strictly mail service point of view, certain changes could be made, but the heavier volume of mail can be more advantageously and economically handled over the Canadian Pacific. The whole matter is under consideration with a view to making changes wherever practicable, and if the cost is not too great, in the near future to establish a transcontinental service on the Canadian National Railway line. A great agitation is going on just now. I am being inundated with telegrams from every town along the Canadian National line asking for a mail service, and I know hon. members are being treated in the same way. Every board of trade is very anxious that this service should be established. But we have to keep in mind the cost. Where practicable changes will be brought about which will to some extent give more of the business to the National line and give the service the people are asking for. Even in the short period I have been Acting Post-

[Mr. Ladner.]

master General several changes have been made in the service on the Canadian National line but that does not mean that there is a complete through service from coast to coast. I trust we shall find it not impossible to put on the through service which the people along the Canadian National lines are so desirous of obtaining.

Mr. LADNER: That is, a through train from Montreal to Vancouver?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): Yes.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): Mail taken on at Jasper may go by one of two ways; it can be taken back to Edmonton and down to Calgary and through on the Canadian Pacific, or it may be taken westward to Kamloops on the Canadian National line and then changed over to the Canadian Pacific. Why should you switch over to the Canadian Pacific a service that originates on the Canadian National?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): There is no doubt that a great many seeming anomalies exist in the service, but the Jasper case seems to be the most aggravated. If so it will have to be remedied. Naturally the short route is the most advantageous and the speediest, and all these matters will have to be carefully looked into.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): The sentimental aspect of the thing should be forgotten; the mere fact that the Canadian Pacific was the first line and these are the oldest towns along the way is no sound argument why there should be no consideration for the residents of towns along the Canadian National line. I would urge the minister to take very much to heart the discussion that took place the other day. A delay in the delivery of mails is a most serious impediment to business and we know, from the evidence adduced before the committee on Railways and Canals, that in many cases there is a delay of some 24 hours. I would recommend that the transcontinental service be divided between the Canadian Pacific and the Canadian National at least fairly enough to give the service which is required by the residents of towns that lie along each line.

Mr. SPENCER: Confirming the statement of the hon. member for Bow River, I want to put a few figures on Hansard. Like the minister, I have been inundated with telegrams in this matter and I think it will readily be conceded that we should have as good service as possible particularly when mails can be