

Mr. ROGERS: Is it not after 5,000 miles?

Mr. SPEAKMAN: Does that apply to every branch of the Department of Veterans Affairs?

Mr. MACE: Yes, this applies. I am sorry, I gave you the wrong figure before; it is 10 and 11—11 cents for the first 5,000 miles and 10 cents from there on. I thought this had been changed.

Mr. ROGERS: I think it has.

Mr. MACE: Yes, I think the figures I gave first are correct. I will double check this and confirm it this afternoon.

Mr. CARTER: Are the rates paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs the same as those paid by other federal departments?

Mr. LALONDE: They have to be; they are laid down by treasury board.

Mr. MACE: Travelling regulations apply to all government departments, as far as I know.

Mr. CARTER: Would you not say in some provinces that the welfare officer travels at a loss under those rates? I am thinking of Mr. Donald Gordon's reference to compensatory rates.

Mr. LALONDE: We accept the principle that travelling costs more in some areas of the country than in others. How much more is pretty difficult to say. It is our experience that with the new rates the variation is not in the amount of money the individual loses; it is in the amount of compensation that he gets over and above his expenses.

In other words, if he is paid the new rate, will he make a profit of two cents a mile, three cents a mile, or only one cent a mile? We do not know that. But we do not think that in any area they are losing money.

Mr. CARTER: Well, apparently if the people in the provinces where travelling conditions are worse—if they can break even, then the other fellows must be making a little money out of it.

Mr. LALONDE: This goes back to the system of paying civil servants across Canada. All classified civil servants get the same amount of money for the same classification, whether they happen to live in Vancouver or in Newfoundland.

Some people will say that as far as the actual compensation goes, it costs them more to live in British Columbia than it does, for example, in Ontario. Yet the system must be based on the same salary levels.

Mr. HERRIDGE: It must be working fairly satisfactorily. Personally, I have not heard many complaints. In fact, I have heard fellows say that they could get along on it.

Mr. LALONDE: There were complaints some years ago, but there have been no complaints since the rates were changed.

Mr. HERRIDGE: I can understand that.

Mr. ROGERS: I think they get consideration if they have a car of their own, and they can do some driving. In some areas where the district is concentrated, they do not get as much mileage, but they probably have better roads. On the other hand, in Saskatchewan I have found that they drive more miles.

Mr. LALONDE: That is right.

Mr. ROGERS: So I think it evens out.

Mr. MACE: To the best of my knowledge we have never had a refusal on the part of any employee to operate his car at these rates. Therefore I can only assume that everybody is satisfied.

Mr. HERRIDGE: Since they were changed.