

Mr. SYMINGTON: Yes. It reads:—

The Governor in Council may authorize the postmaster general to enter into a contract with the corporation for the transport of mails by means of the Trans-Canada Lines.

This amendment says:—

The Governor in Council may from time to time authorize the Postmaster General to enter into a contract amending a contract made under subsection one of this section and containing such terms as the Governor in Council may order.

Mr. JACKMAN: But once you arrive at an agreement as to the per ton mile rate for mail, why cannot you just set the contract and have parliament validate it in the statute and just let it lie there? Surely that would be fair, for the next five or ten years?

Hon. Mr. HOWE: I think it might be unfair to the post office and might be unfair to Trans-Canada Air Lines. If we had made a contract four years ago with the post office, Trans-Canada would have been rolling in money today.

Mr. JACKMAN: Is that not what you are seeking?

Hon. Mr. HOWE: No.

Mr. SYMINGTON: I would suggest that we have now grown up, that the post office department are quite capable of bargaining and I hope we are, and if we are too tough with each other the Governor in Council or the government can settle it as between two government departments. Whatever money this line makes goes to the government, whether it be post office or whether it be consolidated revenue. Surely we should not be hampered in our running this line as a proper operating line by disputes between departments of government. The government themselves should settle it. There is no necessity for paternalism here. Surely we have the right, just the same as any private company has the right, to go and bargain with the post office. If we cannot make a deal, the Governor in Council settles it. The results go to the government in any event. What is wrong about that?

Mr. JACKMAN: This one difficulty arises, Mr. Symington. In a sense it all goes into the same pot; and yet the people of Canada are very interested to know whether or not the post office operates by paying all its costs and also the T.C.A. We have difficulty with the post office now because they carry all the mail from here free of charge and do other services for which they get no payment. It is very difficult to know just what is the real financial situation of the post office on operating account at the end of the year, and it is for that reason that we should like to keep these matters in a water-tight compartment if we can. You say it all boils down to the same thing in a sense because it comes down to the taxpayer, is taken out of the taxpayer; but it does not allow us to appraise the operating efficiency or "worth-whileness" of either department if you mix up the accounts.

Mr. SYMINGTON: I just suggest to you that is none of T.C.A.'s business. What I am saying is that, if you expect the operation of a line on business methods, we ought to be able to operate it on business methods, and we ought not to be held up by disputes between two government departments. If there is a dispute between two government departments it should be settled by the government that rules those departments. Mr. Herring has arrived here. Ask him if he is prepared to have the post office to bargain with me, and if we cannot agree it goes to the government, or whether he wants the present contract to stick. He has just come in. Just ask him. Certainly they have told me they want this, and there it is. I do not see why, because we happen to be operating an air line, we should be held up by disputes between two government departments.