

convenience. I understand that the superintendents are appointed all the same. They are there doing their work, notwithstanding the fact that an Act of Parliament has not been passed. Well, if they can go on for a week, surely they can for a few months, and we will then have ample opportunity of thoroughly looking into this matter. I am inclined to agree in the main features of section 5, but some of the details are very objectionable.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). I cannot say that I concur with my hon. friend that the principle of section 5 is a good one, but as we are more particularly concerned with the details just at present, I would like to point out to the Postmaster General that the language in section 14 is not at all carefully chosen.

Mr. LISTER. We want this well explained.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). I would like to direct the attention of my hon. friend (Mr. Lister) to this point, and I am sure he would agree with me.

Mr. LISTER. I think very likely.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). I think if the hon. gentleman will take a copy of the Act and just follow—

Mr. LISTER. I have it here. I am just following you.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). If the hon. gentleman has before him a copy of the Post Office Act as contained in the Revised Statutes, he will find that section 4 reads as follows :—

There shall be at the seat of government of Canada a Post Office Department for the superintendence and management under the direction of the Postmaster General, of the postal service of Canada.

I would suggest that it would be desirable to follow, as far as possible, the same language in creating this branch. The section I have already referred to does not say that there "shall be at the seat of Government of Canada a Post Office Department composed of the Postmaster General." But that is about the language that is used here :

The Governor in Council may establish a branch of the Post Office Department, to be called the Railway Mail Service Branch, to be composed of a controller, with headquarters at Ottawa, superintendents at points to be determined by the head of the department and such other employees as are, from time to time, necessary for the conduct of the business of the branch.

This is followed up by the next section in which it is provided that the Governor in Council may appoint to this branch a number of persons of whom the branch is to be composed. Now, I may say, and to this point I would ask specially the attention of the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Sir Louis Davies), that in some of the measures that have been brought down during the

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present session, and in some of the contracts, there does not seem to have been a great deal of care in drafting. For example, in one of the measures brought down it is provided :

The said steamers are \* \* \* except such letters as are not required by law to pass through the post office, the contractors shall not receive or permit to be received or convey on board of a mail ship other letters than those mentioned—

Making very little sense, if grammatically construed.

The said steamers are \* \* \* the terms "mails" to include all boxes, bags—

And so on, which is perfectly meaningless. And it continues in this way through a long series of subsections. And another clause of the same contract says :

The contractors shall and will \* \* \* at the same time they, the said contractors, will give to the Minister a guarantee—

And so on. I have been quoting from the contract for the fast Atlantic line. I did not direct attention to these matters at the time it was before us, because I thought probably a court would spell out what the contract meant. But if any one looks at the third section of the fast Atlantic contract, and also at the first section, and compares the main sections with the subsections, he will see that there is no meaning in them, if they are read according to the ordinary rules of grammatical construction. Something of the same haste or lack of care is manifest in the drafting of this Bill. I would suggest to the Postmaster General that it would be far better to follow the language of section 4 of the Post Office Act and use some such expression as this :

The Governor in Council may establish a branch of the Post Office Department, to be called "The Railway Mail Service Branch," and to be under the direction of a controller to be appointed by the Postmaster General.

I think that would be a much better form of expression and would make the statute much more intelligible. Now, with respect to the words "superintendents," which has been referred to by my hon. friend from Westmoreland (Mr. Powell), I do not see that term used in the Post Office Act. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman (Mr. Mullock) can correct me in that or not. If the word "superintendent" is not used or defined in the Post Office Act, it seems to me quite clear that the office of the superintendent should be defined under subsection 119, or some subsequent subsection of the Act, and the duties of the office should be set forth. Otherwise, the difficulty may arise which my hon. friend from Westmoreland has pointed out. I understand the Postmaster General to state that officers have been appointed who, under the Post Office Act, or by some regulation of the Department are known as superintendents. If so, I have been unable to ascertain just