

ment would give to the railway companies. When I arrived in this Department, one of the first things brought to my attention was this very important matter. After looking at the facts and papers before me, I thought the Post Office Department had very skilfully avoided a difficulty and washed its hands entirely of it by leaving it for somebody else to decide. Whilst that is very good, very skillful, my principle has always been to face a difficulty myself and try to solve it without shirking it, no matter what the consequences. I thought this Order-in-Council which brought a temporary solution of the question did not have the result of bridging the difficulty at all. In the first place we submitted the matter to the Department of Justice and we were told it was very doubtful whether the Railway Board had any power to decide such questions. As a lawyer, I agreed with that opinion myself. Moreover, I saw that the decision of the Railway Board, which would be final, as between the Government and the railway companies might perhaps cripple the Department's finances to such an extent that we would not know how to keep our heads above water. Finally, there is power in our own hands given to us by the law to fix ourselves the rates which shall be paid to the railway companies for the transportation of mail matter. True, we are told it is a very arbitrary law, and I am prepared to admit that it is arbitrary, but if we were to look into the whole situation it might be justified. I thought if the Post Office Department had power in its own hands to decide the question that is was no use referring it to the Railway Board. I therefore, had another Order-in-Council drafted and passed withdrawing the question from the Railway Board, and I told the railway companies, who seemed to be somewhat dissatisfied about the move, that I would face the difficulty myself and try and settle it in a business-like way and not shirk it. I may say that I have not done much yet, owing to my trip to England and the necessity of preparing for the session of Parliament. It seems to me that the increase in the amount of mail matter carried is undeniable. Newspapers have increased in importance, volume and