

be that they are being considered even now. Could the minister develop that matter a little? The T.C.A. of course jumps from Lethbridge very nearly through to Vancouver, and service cannot be given in that way. It is true that railway service exists, but it is by no means speedy; and for at least a month or two in the middle of winter the highways are scarcely usable. Many people through the Kootenays, in the Okanagan and in these other settlements are looking forward to the day when there may be some air service supplementing T.C.A. Can the minister give the committee any idea of the cost per passenger mile, for instance, in such a pick-up service, whether it be in that mountainous area or in the flatter land of the prairies?

Mr. HOWE: As the hon. member for Yale has indicated, there are three applications before the board for a service between Vancouver and Lethbridge through the Crowsnest pass. The air transport board has set down a hearing in Vancouver for January 15, when the three applications will be considered. In the meantime they are studying the merits of the three routes for which application has been made. The applications are not identical; each specifies different stops, and it will be the purpose of the board to see that, whichever application is granted, the applicant will be required to give an adequate service to the citizens in that area.

This is considered an excellent aeroplane route. The rail transportation, as I think my hon. friend will agree, is not the best, and weather conditions are such that from time to time the highways are blocked. Another fortunate feature is that the area is well supplied with airports, so that a well-equipped and well-financed company should be able to give an excellent service and should find it a profitable operation.

I am sorry I cannot give my hon. friend an indication of the rate. Local services of that type require a higher rate than the Trans-Canada service, on which the rate is about 5½ cents a mile. This rate will be somewhat higher, but I think it will be desirable for those operating the route to set a rate that will attract patronage, and it will be the duty of the air transport board to see that the rate is not excessive. Just what rate will be established is a matter between the operator and the air transport board.

Mr. STIRLING: Would the minister hazard a guess that it might be twice or three times as high?

Mr. HOWE: My guess is that it would not be as much as twice as high.

Mr. COCKERAM: Previously those of us who were interested in aeronautics appeared before the board of transport commissioners, but under the amendment to the Act passed in August, 1944, we set up an air transport board. What was the justification at that time for setting up the board?—Because certainly the board of transport commissioners carried out their duties in an efficient manner. I was surprised when the minister was not able to give us a report for the period during which the air transport board has been in operation. Perhaps the minister can enlarge on that, telling us who are the members of the board and why it is not possible to get a complete report on the activities of the board up to the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. HOWE: There are three members of the board. First is Mr. R. A. C. Henry, formerly deputy minister of transport, formerly head of the bureau of economics of the Canadian National railways, a man with great experience in air transport work. The next member is Mr. J. P. R. Vachon, formerly of Trans-Canada Air Lines and Canadian Pacific Air Lines, an experienced pilot with long years of service in bush flying. The third member is Air Vice-Marshal Alan Ferrier, formerly in charge of air regulation in the Department of Transport, who had distinguished service in the Royal Canadian Air Force during the war, and who is thoroughly qualified to serve on a board of this kind. The reason for separating the work of this board from that of the board of transport commissioners was that it was felt that air transport would require stimulation. The work of the board of transport commissioners is regulatory, and that board is not equipped to deal with the stimulation of transport services. For example, the studies the air transport board has been making would not be in the line of the ordinary work of the board of transport commissioners. Furthermore the board of transport commissioners is bound by the act under which it operates. It is a judicial board, and the act was designed for regulating railways. Regulation of a somewhat different type is required for air service. The board has been in operation only a few months. It has existed only about a year, and that is why the annual report has not been brought down; but the statutory report will be brought down at the end of the fiscal year, as required by the act.

Mr. COCKERAM: Have these two boards the same powers?

Mr. HOWE: No. The powers of the air transport board are related to transportation by air, and are of a different nature from those granted the board of transport commissioners.