

be made it will be seen at once that difficulties must arise. The Postmaster General's department will have to define what is a newspaper, and whether a scientific periodical or a periodical dealing exclusively, say with railways or inventions, can be classed at the lower rate of postage as a newspaper. Some representatives of the department say that certain periodicals can not be classed as newspapers. It is a very difficult point to decide what constitutes a newspaper, whether a periodical published daily or weekly, and containing current events of the day is to be defined only as a newspaper. All agricultural and other information is news to the party who takes such paper for the purpose of acquiring knowledge, just as much as the news published in an ordinary newspaper. That is one of the principal points. I thought that the press and those who took a different view from the Postmaster General on this question, never yielded the point that parliament should not have the sole power and control of imposing taxation, and I did think that whilst that point was not yielded, either by the representatives of the press or by my hon. friend and myself who took that view, we accepted the proposition made by the Postmaster General at the time when he said that he would see, before regulations were adopted, that they should be approved by the Treasury Board, and that at the meeting of the Treasury Board the representatives of the press should have an opportunity of being heard. Some representatives of the press said 'But the Treasury Board is the mere echo of the minister who submits certain reports to them for approval or disapproval.' I have had some thirteen or fourteen years experience on the Treasury Board, and I know that that idea is not correct, unless the members of the present Treasury Board are different from those that formed it when I was one of the members. I have often made recommendations which have been rejected by the Treasury Board. I thought that as head of the department I knew what was in the interest of the department but I found others who thought they knew better than I did, and my recommendation was set aside. But it does not stop there; the Treasury Board may approve of the recommendation made by a minister but that has to be submitted to the Executive Council before it becomes law, and in very many cases the council rejects the recommendation of the minister, and of the Treasury Board. I make that

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL.

statement in order to show hon. gentlemen that neither the head of a department nor the Treasury Board is paramount in any matter. I thought there was some force in a statement made this morning that in case rates and regulations were put in force of such a character that they would be detrimental to business, those who suffered from them would have to pay the increased rates of postage for five or six months, and at the end of that time would suffer loss. I saw the force of that, but when I suggested that Parliament might refund the excess charges, I was answered that the department might not refund it. I interviewed the Postmaster General and pointed out our fears. He at once said that in all cases where anything of that character occurred, the money would be refunded to the different parties who had paid it. I asked 'Am I at liberty to make that statement on your behalf when the subject comes up?' And he said yes. That ought to meet the objection that has been raised as to the increase of postage rates but it may be said, 'We have no confidence in the Postmaster General; we do not believe what he says, and perhaps he will not do it.' Even though they have no confidence in him, when a statement of that kind is made in Parliament, I care not who the minister may be or what his political views may be, his decision would be reversed at once, and he would be condemned by the representatives of the people,—and more particularly in the case of imposing postage upon newspapers. I would advise those who are so deeply interested in this matter to accept the assurances given by the Postmaster General, that in case of any one having been subjected to excessive rates, which have not been approved either by the Treasury Board or by Parliament, the excess payments will be refunded. There is another point which the Senate should consider: if we adopt this amendment and the Bill is not accepted, then I suppose we revert back to what existed prior to the introduction of this measure. The Bill deals with very many other points of interest besides that of postage, and will materially affect other interests. The new sections of the Post Office Act refer to the qualifications of a superintendent, which is a very important point, and the law on that subject should have been amended long ago. Then there is the appointment of and the salary of railway mail clerks, which has been the subject of much controversy for years. The initial salary