

Supply—Mines and Technical Surveys

If, for instance, one company tenders for a particular contract requiring the use of five Sikorskys and three Bell G-47's, it may happen that this company does not at the time have the five Sikorskys and the three Bells required. However, it can make arrangements with another firm to rent the aircraft, or it may buy new ones, as frequently happens.

It must be realized that the companies are not going to keep an unlimited number of aircraft in case they might get contracts; that would involve too great a liability risk.

As I have just said, this procedure is followed daily and is familiar to the air industry.

For that type of contracts, the companies exchange and borrow aircraft from one another. This is nothing to be ashamed of, because it is perfectly proper. Such arrangements are only natural in business and industry.

Once again, the important thing for the department is that the work be done on schedule, under favourable conditions, and that at the end of the season the program be completed.

(Text):

Mr. Pickersgill: I must say that the minister's further explanation seems to make the situation even worse, because the procedure now being followed, according to the minister, contains the worst of both worlds. The hon. gentleman says different companies can file different tariffs with the air transport board at varying times. They can file them when they like, provided they do so before a certain date. Then, after these different submissions have been filed, the Department of Transport says "eeny, meeny, miny, mo", or on a similarly arbitrary basis picks out the one it intends to take. The minister referred to the tariffs as they were in 1954. The tariffs then were uniform and the air transport board decided what tariff was proper for a particular kind of service. I know whereof I speak, because I was in the government at that time and I have some experience of these particular matters.

Once you admit that various people can file different tariffs it is obvious that the person who files first, so that the details become known, is at a distinct disadvantage compared with a person who comes along at the eleventh hour and files his tariff. This is exactly what my hon. friend from Laurier was complaining about when he said, as reported in *Hansard* on March 28, at page 3437:

Here is my criticism of the manner in which this is being done, and I say this without any fear of contradiction. The minister may contradict

it but I have it on reliable information. It is well known in the trade that notwithstanding the fact that tariffs had been filed, Autair was not the lowest of those who filed tariffs in accordance with this policy of the minister which merits only condemnation.

It was this to which my hon. friend from Laurier was objecting, not the fact that the minister followed a system which was in existence under the previous regime. It was the fact that we have this mixed up system, if I may call it that, not tenders, but not fixed prices, which gives opportunity for just what seems to have happened in this particular case. It is notorious that this company—and this was well known to the air transport board because parliament had been told about it—has a bad accident record. This company is a fly by night outfit—I do not mean that they fly helicopters by night, because, of course, they have the midnight sun up there—but some of its operations would not have stood the light of day and it is odd that the government should have chosen this particular outfit for this job.

Mr. Dumas: Earlier this afternoon I mentioned the fact that it was encouraging to note that members of the committee are aware of the importance of this department and realize, as was evident, that the services of this government department are of great value not only to the constituencies and areas which they represent but also to the development of Canadian natural resources as a whole.

I was very sorry to learn from a newspaper dispatch of the death of a former member of this house, Mr. Walter Little, who was a member from 1935 to 1953. Mr. Little represented the constituency of Timiskaming and he was a real friend of the mining industry, of the miners and of all those interested in this important work. He worked very hard for his constituency and I can only say that we are very sorry to hear of his death and extend our sincere sympathy to Mrs. Little and to her family in their sad bereavement.

Mr. Peters: I should like to join with the hon. member who has just spoken in offering my sympathy to the family of Mr. Walter Little who represented the riding which I now represent. He was, indeed, a good friend of the mining industry. He went into the industry very early and built up a large trucking operation. His sons are now active in enterprises in that area. I wish to associate myself with the words of condolence we have just heard.

Item agreed to.