Sticky postal state eased by Senate bil

WASHINGTON — The Senate passed a bill Tuesday providing an additional \$1 billion subsidy for the debt-ridden Postal Service and temporarily barring postal rate increases and service cutbacks. The vote was

Designed as a stop-gap measure, it also provides for appointment of a special commission to examine

postal problems and submit recom-mendations by Feb. 15, 1977. Pending submission of the commission's report, postal rates would be frozen and service cutbacks would be prohibited.

A substitute measure by Sen. Ernest F. Hollings, (D-S.C.,) to reimpose congressional control over the Postal Service's budget was rejected by a vote of 58-26. The bill now goes to conference with the House.

Last October the House passed a

measure that, as Hollings proposed, would require the Postal Service to come to Congress each year to get an

appropriation.

The Senate bill is backed by the Ford administration, except for one amendment adopted Monday, but Hollings predicted it would be unacceptable to the House.

McGee said the Senate measure offered the only hope of stabilizing the Postal Service's financial situation until next year. Then, he said, Congress will have to take a new look at what should be done.

Before passage of the bill, the Senate defeated 82-6 an amendment by Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., to permit the delivery of first-class mail by private companies.

Helms amendment to permit citizens to sue the government for damages for delays or misdelivery of

The only amendment adopted over the administration's objection, offered Monday by Sen. Jennings Randolph, D-W. Va., would make it more difficult for the Postal Service to close or consolidate post offices.

Under a 1970 reorganization at the Postal Service was established outside the regular Congressional budget process and was intended to operate under a board of governors, much like a private corporation.

After the defeat of Hollings' substitute, Sen. Bob Dole, the Republi can vice presidential nominee, of fered two amendments opposed by the Ford administration.



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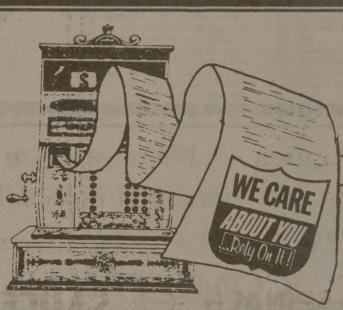


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