

Newfoundland

informed that they had authority to run the railway on north from the border of Labrador and Quebec to develop the mines in the western part of Labrador. I do not understand the questions asked by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. I do not believe that power applied to the whole of Newfoundland or to anything else than what the bill called for. As the province of Quebec has given the company the authority they require to operate in that part of Canada which is in the province of Quebec, that is their business. If Newfoundland gave them authority in connection with a few miles into Labrador not over fifty or sixty, I do not see where we are in much jeopardy in respect of this particular clause.

Mr. Nicholson: Section 31 states:

At the date of union, or as soon thereafter as practicable, Canada will take over the following services and will as from the date of union relieve the province of Newfoundland of the public costs incurred in respect of each service taken over, namely . . . (f) defence.

As I mentioned previously, the newspapers indicate that while the Prime Minister is in Washington he is to have some discussions there with regard to the bases upon which the Americans have ninety-nine year leases. Would either the Prime Minister or the Minister of National Defence care to make some statement with regard to discussions which have taken place between Canada and Great Britain, or between Canada and the delegation, on the question of taking over these bases? The Americans have made large expenditures. If the newspaper reports are correct, that there is a disposition to take over those bases from the Americans, it will be necessary for either Canada or some other country to spend large sums of money in Newfoundland to maintain the present standard of living there as a result of these American expenditures. I think it would be helpful if the committee had some information with regard to the discussions which have taken place on this question.

Mr. St. Laurent: There have been no discussions whatsoever with the delegation about this matter, because it was felt that it was one over which neither the Newfoundland delegation nor the Canadian delegation could make any decision. Real rights had been created by the granting of ninety-nine year leases on certain sections of land. If and when Newfoundland becomes a part of Canada, those leases will still be valid leases affecting the lands described in them. They contain provisions which go beyond the provisions to which the Canadian government has agreed with respect to anything done by the United States government in the terri-

tory of Canada, and we hope that it will be possible to get the government of the United States to agree that it will not exercise those rights in a manner that would offend against our rights of sovereignty in Newfoundland. But that is something that will have to be brought about by negotiation and agreement with the government of the United States. The situation is the same as if the hon. member, having a farm, leased a building lot on it for ninety-nine years and then sold his farm. The acquirer would have to take the farm and respect the agreement the hon. member had made with regard to the building lot. But he could go to the man who had the lease on the building lot and try to make a new deal with him. That is what we intend to try to do with the government of the United States. But if they are not disposed to make any change in the arrangement, we shall be obliged to respect the rights that exist there, just as we shall be obliged to respect as a fact the existing situation in the territory of Newfoundland.

We have had preliminary negotiations with the state department, but we have not been in a position to do anything final in that regard because Newfoundland is still territory over which we have no control. Nothing definite can be determined unless and until we acquire control over the territory of Newfoundland.

Mr. Coldwell: Paragraph (g) of section 31 refers to protection and encouragement of fisheries and operation of bait services. How do these bait services differ from what we have in the maritime provinces? As far as I can remember, there are no federal bait services for the maritime fishermen. I may be wrong in that respect, but I do not think I am. What are those bait services that are referred to? Are they convenient services which the fishermen find valuable both economically and socially? Is this service the Newfoundland fisherman enjoys the kind of service that might be extended to the fishermen of the maritime coasts where, I believe, the provision of bait is, at some seasons of the year, extremely difficult? I have an idea that in Newfoundland there is being done something different from what is being done by the federal Department of Fisheries in the maritimes or in British Columbia. I should like to know just what this paragraph means.

Mr. St. Laurent: If the hon. member will read the statement that was made by the Minister of Fisheries yesterday, I think he will find the answer to that question.

Mr. Coldwell: I did not find the answer. That is why I asked the question.