

railway that would go out of Canada, through Labrador, then come back into Canada and proceed through Canadian territory to Ungava bay. But the company will not be able, under this charter, to do anything outside Canada without getting a franchise from the sovereign of the territory outside Canada where it may desire to operate.

Mr. CHURCH: We are a party to Great Britain's granting of a ninety-nine year lease, binding Canada with America, which is practically a freehold of all the Newfoundland bases, and that includes Labrador inland as well as on the ocean. In view of that agreement, have we the power as a parliament to go into Newfoundland and give away, not only the bases, but the land and the bay where they are trying to develop a port? Ungava bay is a big bay and they have no port there yet, and the bill is in the dark on it. Have we the power to do this in view of the ninety-nine year lease made by the British government with the United States for the use of all these bases in Newfoundland and right down to British Guiana, which is the size of Great Britain? You know, Mr. Chairman, that in the last war German boats came right up the St. Lawrence and we had a secret meeting of parliament in connection with that. I contend that Canada is bound by that ninety-nine year lease and that we have no power to part with this property.

These people told the railway committee that they had dealt with a former Newfoundland government before the war. I would ask the Minister of Transport, what was the nature of the arrangement, if any, the said company made with the old provisional government of Newfoundland? What form did it take? Was it just an act of the provisional government? If it was, no wonder Newfoundland went bankrupt. I think the committee is entitled to this information. Does not the agreement with the United States for a ninety-nine year lease of bases include not only the bases on the ocean but the bases on the land and in Newfoundland and all of Labrador, and all the inlets on the coast? In the last war German boats were up near Iceland and Greenland, off Newfoundland, and in the St. Lawrence and Hudson strait, and we had to send ships up there. It cost a lot of money and lives.

The House of Commons is passing this bill blindly, and we shall regret it in the days to come if we hand over all this territory to private ownership forever. It is not a work for the general advantage of Canada. It is

[Mr. St. Laurent.]

not even within Canada. So how can it be for the general advantage of Canada when the territory and inlets are not in Canada at all? We might just as well claim that inlets and coves in China are works for the general advantage of Canada. I should like to know if the legal department of the crown has been consulted about this bill. I do not like to worry the Minister of Justice. I shall not ask him for his legal opinion, but I think he should have been consulted as to whether this bill is worth the paper it is written on. It goes over the heads of the Canadian and British governments and over the head of the provisional government of Newfoundland. Great Britain had a temporary trusteeship over the whole country of Newfoundland while the war was on. I should like to know who drafted and recommended this bill. I think all that information should be on the table. So far as I am concerned I do not think it makes any difference. I feel that I have done my duty as a member of parliament in calling the attention of the committee to what is involved in this omnibus bill.

Most of the people are fine people. They are not being criticized personally at all. I do not blame them for coming to parliament and asking for this legislation, because this is a pretty easy institution which we have assembled here. Nobody would give away that property in this way if they owned it themselves. What we are dealing with here is the mining industry.

Mr. McKAY: On first view this bill appears to me to be a virtual monopoly. If that is so I should like to ask the Minister of Transport whether it will prohibit the operation of any other railway company in that particular area. If it does not I cannot see that there should be any real objection to the bill. On the surface it does appear to me, though, that it would prohibit all other railways from going into that district.

Mr. CHEVRIER: I do not think there is any difficulty in answering the hon. member's question. This bill, no more than any other bill which is approved by a committee of the house, creates a monopoly. Any other corporation or company which seeks similar rights can apply to parliament in the same way as did this company, and its application will be dealt with by the committee on railways, canals and telegraph lines. While I do not know what the answer would be, I am sure that the committee would want to give such corporation similar rights to these. The answer is, therefore, that this bill does not preclude another company from making application.