

Mr. OLIVER. No, it was not discussed on those lines. There was no connection whatever with the alleged sale of the charter. I hear the hon. chairman of the committee say the whole thing was sold. Now allow me to say that the charter that was sold was an Ontario charter and not a Dominion charter. The Ontario charter covered the ground between Lake Superior and Hudson Bay and did not cover any part of the ground that was covered by the original charter of this Hudson Bay and North-west Railway, because the Ontario government has no power over that region. Four years ago a charter was granted to the Hudson Bay and North-west Railway Company to make a railway connection between the waters of the Hudson Bay and the waters of Mackenzie Basin by way of Chesterfield Inlet and Great Slave Lake. The term allowed for the commencement of the work under that charter either had expired or was about to expire. The company come before parliament and asked for a revival of that part of the charter, and for a new charter, or a new extension, to cover the line between Lake Superior and Hudson Bay. It was that part of the charter which the committee objected to, and we have no desire to ask the committee to revise its decision on that point. All we ask is that the House refer back the Bill to the committee so that the company may get the usual extension of time that has repeatedly been granted to railway enterprises in new parts of the country, where they do not compete with anybody, and where they cannot stand in the way of any other enterprise. I am willing to accept the judgment of the committee that the granting of that part of the charter between Hudson Bay and Lake Superior might have interfered with another charter, and therefore the committee were justified in refusing that charter. I cannot agree that to continue a charter which covers ground no less than 700 or 1,000 miles distant, which is not in that part of the country at all, in which no man is asking for any authority or power, can in any way prejudice any existing interest, and therefore there can be no harm in giving the extension of time asked for.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. Mr. Speaker, I think the remarks which my hon. friend (Mr. Oliver) has made are worthy of this consideration at least, that the question as to whether the extension of time which is asked for in respect to the other railway lines is a different matter altogether from that which the committee discussed and decided should be again considered by the committee. I would suggest to my hon. friend that he withdraw his motion now and renew it in a couple of days. In the meantime the hon. Minister of Railways and Canals (Hon. Mr. Blair) and the Chairman of the Railway Committee may confer with him and look into the question so that when it comes before the House

again we will know the exact position of the matter.

Motion withdrawn.

POST OFFICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Hon. JAMES SUTHERLAND (Oxford) moved for leave to introduce Bill (No. 121) to amend the Post Office Act. He said: Mr. Speaker, I may say that this is principally a departmental Bill. The first clause is suggested by the Department of Justice as being a necessary amendment to the Post Office Act to make clear the meaning of the words 'post letter.' I believe this has become necessary in view of some cases that have come before the courts, and that it is desirable to amend the Act. The second clause is to provide for the establishment of dead letter offices in some places not now provided for.

Mr. CLARKE. Have you decided at what point you intend to establish these dead letter offices?

Hon. Mr. SUTHERLAND. This amendment provides that there shall be dead letter offices at St. John, Kingston, Hamilton, London, Vancouver and Dawson. I may say that the department have found this desirable and necessary. The results of the establishment of offices for newspapers at these points have been so satisfactory that it is desired to have power given by the Act to deal with letters as well as papers at these points.

Hon. Mr. HAGGART. Have you not that power now under the Act? Did not the hon. Postmaster General (Mr. Mulock) introduce a Bill last year giving you that power?

Hon. Mr. SUTHERLAND. No; in looking into the Act I find that the power is given in respect to special points, and this Bill is to increase the number of places where these offices may be established. The last clause provides for the establishment of a class of employees known as 'train porters.' I do not suppose the name would indicate particularly what they are, but it is found now that two or three times a week, especially in the large cities during the time that newspapers are being sent out in large quantities, an extra mail clerk has to be sent, and he has to receive mileage in addition to his salary for doing what is ordinary work in assisting the mail clerks with an overcrowded mail. It is thought that a saving would be effected, and that the work would be more efficiently done by establishing a class of employees known as train porters who would be at headquarters, who could go out with these overcrowded mail trains, and who could, also, from time to time, take the places of transfer officers who are ill. There is a difficulty found in the department when a transfer officer is ill in