

Private Bills

that was adduced by Mr. Durrell, who was called as a witness for this company, and I think it must be accepted that his evidence was given in a very straightforward manner. He stated that in the beginning his company had shown great confidence in the area by investing large sums of money in the development of the iron ore area and in pushing the railway from Seven Islands to Schefferville.

He stated in his evidence that opportunity had been given to four Canadian insurance companies to invest in this development, and that the offers had not been accepted. So I feel that this company has shown its good faith in the development of the area by pushing the railway line from Seven Islands through to Schefferville during the first period of ten years.

The company now wishes to extend its line farther to Ungava bay, and it is not for its own purposes alone that it intends to do this. When questions were put to Mr. Durrell he said the railway would endeavour to carry any passengers and any other freight that was offered in that area; and it must do so under the provisions of transportation legislation in this country. The area has not yet been proved. As has been said by the hon. member for Trinity, it will be necessary for surveys to be conducted, taking over a period of three years, before this line can be undertaken. The completion of the line will take from five to six years, making a total of not less than eight years. I believe that reasonable businessmen would hesitate to undertake a proposition of this kind if they were limited to a period of five years during which they would be obliged to complete this portion of the line.

The bill says they must complete this portion of the line within a period of 10 years. I believe it is important to provide this type of transportation into the northern part of the province of Quebec. This company does not ask for a subsidy. It is not asking for the investment of any public moneys in this enterprise. All it asks is the opportunity to complete this line within a period of 10 years, which seemed reasonable to the majority of the members of the committee.

Mr. Hodgson: Like the previous speakers, I sat on this committee. I was also a member of the committee in 1947 when this company came before this parliament originally to obtain a franchise to build this railroad. At that time the company assured the committee that 10 years was a long enough period to complete this railroad. In that respect they have not lived up to their obligation, but these things are sometimes estimated wrongly.

Nevertheless the company has built some 355 miles of this railroad at a cost to it of

[Mr. Cavers.]

\$123 million. Like so many other companies in Canada, it is owned, controlled and operated by United States interests, and the ore, as we know, is being shipped to United States ports for use in the manufacture of steel in United States factories. This is one more example, as far as I can see, of this government giving control of a great land mass and a potential mining area into the hands of Americans. By owning the railroad and having built it over half the way, the Quebec North Shore and Labrador Railway Company has three strikes against any other company which might be a potential producer of minerals in that area.

The company has come back to parliament, and I understand the purpose of the bill is to extend the time limit for another 10 years. The members of the committee in 1947 were not all the same members of the present committee, but they were the same kind of people with the same thoughts. This committee will sit next year and five or six years from now whether or not the present members are still members of it, and I think those who are members at that time will be just as good thinkers, just as enlightened, and will have the interests and welfare of Canada just as much at heart as we have.

It seems to me that five years is long enough to extend the period of time when the company was so sure 10 years ago that they could build the whole line in 10 years. The present extension is to commence after 1957, and if they are given five years it will really mean that they will have six years to extend the railway. When Mr. Durrell was giving evidence to the committee he was asked this question by the hon. member for Lambton West, as found at page 18 of the proceedings of the committee:

Q. I wonder whether from your own knowledge or from the knowledge of your experts—supposing you were to start the railway extension—you could say how long it would take. Suppose, for example, you start next year.

A. It would take a minimum of four years unless of course we did something like we did on the other section, that is, flew in all our supplies at a fantastic cost.

This is the vice president of the company. He is a man who should know what he is talking about, and I think he does. He stated that they could build the railway in four years without going to the extra expense of flying in equipment and supplies. In another place in the evidence he also said that it would take two or probably three years for the surveys. That makes a total of six years. The amendment moved by my colleague the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra would give the company their full quota of six years.

In any event, if the company made a reasonable start within the period of five or six