

may very well be adopted by this House without any sacrifice of the principle or rule enunciated by the Prime Minister, and if he will give me his attention I will explain my reasons for thinking so. The Bill asks for two things; it asks for a connection between Hudson Bay and Lake Superior, and it also asks for an extension of time for the construction of the other portion of the charter already possessed by the people who were before the committee, that is, an extension of time for constructing a road partly by water and partly rail from Hudson Bay along the Mackenzie river. That part of the Bill was not considered by the committee. All the committee considered was the granting of a charter for the connection between Hudson Bay and Lake Superior, and that the committee refused to entertain. As I understand the motion of the hon. member for Alberta, he does not ask the committee to reconsider that question, the question which the committee really decided, but simply to grant the other portion of the Bill extending the time for the construction of the rest of the road already chartered. Therefore, in referring the Bill back to the committee, it is not sought for a moment to ask the committee to change its decision in order to reconsider that which it has already decided; it is simply asking the committee to consider a question involved in the Bill which was not at all considered by the committee on the previous occasion.

Hon. JAMES SUTHERLAND (North Oxford). I do not think the hon. member for Halton (Mr. Henderson) has fairly presented the case to the House. The case he quoted is not analogous to this. In that particular case a Bill was reported by the committee, and on strong statements being made that other parties wished to be heard, it was referred back to the committee. To the principle now advocated by the Prime Minister, there was an exception made in that case, and when the Bill was reported and came before the House for the third reading the members of the House were divided on the question as to whether it should be read the third time or laid over. The present case is altogether different. I would say to my hon. friend from Alberta that it would seriously inconvenience the business of the House if we adopted the custom of referring Bills back after they had been thoroughly threshed out in committee, except, as the Prime Minister said, very good cause were shown therefor. In this case I am free to say there is no such cause. There was a very long debate in the committee, nearly the whole day was spent in the discussion, and the Bill was thrown out by a large majority indeed. Evidently there was very little difference of opinion in the committee as to whether the legislation should be granted. I would be the last member of this House to refuse an opportunity of reconsidering a Bill if good cause were shown,

MR. BELCOURT.

and I would myself move such a motion; but if, every time a Bill is defeated, we are to have a motion in the House to refer it back again and open up the whole question, I say the business of the House would be seriously interfered with. In this particular case I do not think a good case has been made at all for referring the Bill back to the committee.

Mr. R. LEMIEUX (Gaspé). I may add to the remarks made by the hon. gentleman who is chairman of the Committee on Railways and Canals (Hon. Mr. Sutherland), that I voted for the Bill in question when it was discussed in the committee. I must say it was discussed on its merits, and although several amendments were suggested, the committee persistently refused to adopt the Bill. I think it would be simply a waste of time to send the Bill back to the committee. We discussed it nearly two hours, and a great many suggestions were made by the promoters, but the committee would not accept them, and rejected the Bill.

Mr. OLIVER. The question for consideration by the House turns on whether good reasons have or have not been shown for a reference back to the committee.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). Will the hon. member state the reasons, as I did not quite catch them at first.

Mr. OLIVER. I am going to do so. The chairman of the committee has said that it is perfectly legitimate to refer a Bill back to that committee if there is just cause therefor. Now, the cause we allege in this case is that the powers asked for by the Bill were divided distinctly into two parts. One of those parts was fully considered by the committee, all the amendments suggested were refused by the committee, and the Bill as a whole was rejected on the ground of objections made to that part of the Bill. The chief objection was that the line paralleled another line for which a charter had been granted between Lake Superior and Hudson Bay, that it was entering into a territory about to be provided for by another charter. Now, we have no desire to raise that question again, we accept the judgment of the committee in that particular.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR (Hon. Clifford Sifton). What part of the Bill do you wish to have reconsidered?

Mr. OLIVER. The part which allows the construction of a railway connection between the waters of the Hudson Bay and the waters of the Mackenzie river. The first charter that was granted provided for a railway connection between the waters of the Hudson Bay and the waters of the Mackenzie river.

Hon. Mr. SUTHERLAND. Would it cover the same ground?