

because many of those leases run up to thirty and fifty miles. I say it is impossible for the government to have had the information as to what they are disposing of to those parties. It is a matter which the House should be informed upon, and I hope my hon. friend from Victoria will take steps, at the earliest possible date, to ask for a return of all papers in regard to this particular question. Disposing of those immense interests in such a wholesale way must necessarily strike the House as being a matter of very grave importance, and I hope that at an early date we will be put in possession of full information upon the question.

Hon. Mr. MILLS—I shall certainly bring down the information when we meet again. I shall consider the observations which have been addressed to the House as a notice, and ask my colleague, the Minister of the Interior, for the information.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—If my recollection serves me right, I read in the *Citizen* this morning that the hon. Minister of the Interior informed the House of Commons, in answer to a question last night, that 150 miles had been granted to one of these gentlemen, Chevalier Drolet.

Hon. Mr. POWER—I think it was in the Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—That lease was granted many months ago.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—I do not suppose that makes any difference. They are all in the North-west Territories, and the rules and regulations apply not only to the Saskatchewan, but to the Yukon, Stikine and other rivers.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—As a matter of fact, there are several hundred applications now before the Minister of the Interior, and it is expected that action will be taken upon them immediately. The policy of the department seems to have been to grant leases upon application being made, entirely irrespective of whether the government was in possession of information upon them or not.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—There are now published, as the hon. gentleman is aware, regulations affecting sub-aqueous mining. There may have been—I think there was—at least one or two leases issued before. I cannot

now recall them, but I noticed the observations in the paper that some considerable mileage had been leased and I intended to have asked the Minister of the Interior about it to-day, but it escaped my attention.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—The present regulations provide for leases being granted on application being made.

BILLS INTRODUCED.

Bill (A) "An Act for the relief of Robert Augustus Baldwin Hart."—(Hon. Mr. Cle-mow.)

Bill (B) "An Act incorporating the Central Canada Loan and Savings Co."—(Hon. Mr. MacInnes.)

DELAYED RETURNS.

INQUIRY.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—Before the House adjourns, I should like to call attention once more to that return which I moved for some eight or ten months ago. I should certainly like to know whether the government intends to comply with the order of the House, and whether we can have it at some period of time. I think it would be much better if the government would lay down the principle, when a motion is made asking for information or returns, of refusing to grant it, giving their reasons for that course, rather than appear to consent to grant it and never bring it down. We have waited quite long enough for that return. There are other returns much in the same position. It is my particular duty just now, perhaps, to repeat what the hon. Secretary of State used to say when I was leader of the House: I hope he will not fall into that error with which he charged us and which I am not prepared to say existed to the extent that they have been practising it.

Hon. Mr. MILLS—The return having been asked for by the House, the House is entitled to the return, and I know my hon. friend is anxious that it should be brought down. The wish of the House will be complied with in this regard. I entirely concur in the observations which the leader of the opposition has addressed to the House on this occasion, that if the government think it is not in the public interest that a return should be brought down, the fact ought to