

lines and operate telegraphs. This is something which we could not possibly do on our own and if this thing remained in our charter we might run into difficulty in the future, having to come before a regulatory board. We just did not want it. We want to clean it up and make it just an oil and gas exploration company for natural resources exploitation.

Mr. Peters: I am interested in the old format we used for establishing parliamentary

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companies. It did give the right to build town sites and telephone lines and everything under the sun—railroads in some cases. When these powers are granted—your Company has been in existence a long time—have there been liabilities attached to the supernumerary powers that you have and that your Company was not interested in using? Is there a liability attached to some of those powers as well?

Mr. Gemmell: What do you mean by liability? Do you mean in the form of debt?

Mr. Peters: No, no. Is there an obligation? Are there obligations attached to these powers?

Mr. Gemmell: Oh, no. Not until we exercise them.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): Is this a detriment to the Company?

Mr. Peters: Yes. Is there a negative side to excessive powers?

Mr. Gemmell: No.

Mr. Peters: The reason I am asking this is that we have for some time now been interested in changing that original format that had everything but the kitchen sink in it, and we have always said that you did not want this in it. I was just asking whether or not there has been a liability attached to some of these powers that you did not want and have never used?

The Vice-Chairman: Gentlemen, Mr. Louis Lesage is here from our, Corporation Branch of the office of the Secretary of State. Perhaps Mr. Lesage could set the Committee members' minds at ease with respect to the nature of this bill we have before us. Mr. Lesage, would you care to cover this?

Mr. Louis Lesage (Corporation Branch, Secretary of State): Mr. Chairman, regarding the remarks about limiting the intention of

the Company, of limiting its objectives by dropping those powers of having telephone and telegraph lines and the like, I think that the Company does not in fact lose anything because if the Company wants to go into that field, it would have to come back anyway to the governing agencies. If you have an opportunity to see Bill C-198, which was brought before the House a month or so ago, you will see that all those companies will also, if and when Bill C-198 is passed, be under the letters patent system, but with the concurrence of the governing agencies like the Board of Transport Commissioners or the National Energy Board according to the various objectives they want to pursue.

In the case of The Canada North-west Land Company (Limited), I understand that they have never used such powers. They have no intention of making use of them, at least in the near future, but if thereafter they want to come back and ask for those powers, they will not have to come back to Parliament, and it would not be detrimental to the company to accept the bill as is.

Mr. Peters: Mr. Chairman, the point that I wanted to make was that the Corporation Branch has been using a format whereby we have granted in the past four or five years the right for some people to do everything including put satellites on the moon if they want, and they were only going to be looking for oil or running a small pipeline 20 miles or something like this. I just was curious to ask this Company that has had long experience if there is not only no advantage but a decided disadvantage in having these powers.

I agree that a Company should be more definite in what they want to do and what their aspiration is and then the legislation should provide for that and not a bunch of other things that the Company does not want. I am in agreement. This was a good opportunity to talk to a Company that has been in existence for something over 60 years and their experience probably is indicative of what the experience is of most of the companies that have these broad powers.

Mr. Gemmell: We have not found them any disadvantage. This Company is virtually a new company at the moment. It has never tried to exercise any of these powers so therefore it has not experienced any disadvantage from having had this thing. But in future we could see that circumstances might