

Charles Coupar Barrie, who is associated on the directorate of the Danube Navigation Company with Mr. Szarvasy. Sir Coupar Barrie is interesting to me as a member of the Post Office Advisory Council. It is an excellent idea to have gentlemen of this type advising the state as to its best interests. The second addition is that of Mr. F. R. S. Balfour, who was associated on the Guardian Assurance Company with Mr. Szarvasy. Mr. Balfour appears as a member of the Bank of Montreal and the Bank of Montreal in France. This is interesting because Canadian finance plays an important part in these matters.

When an imperial-owned cable service is transferred to a group of international financiers the house is entitled to all the information at the disposal of the government. It is not enough for the minister in charge to say that this is a secret matter. He has given us three documents which might be secret in their character, but those documents refer to certain other papers which it is important we should have so that in the consideration of this question every hon. member may have the benefit of all information available. The additional documents should be tabled.

Reference was made in those documents to a Mr. Brown, and I would like to know who that gentleman is. He must have been an intermediary of some character during the negotiations of the summer of 1927 between the Post Office Department and the other interests involved.

I strenuously object to the government handing over a government-owned utility which was beginning to show surpluses in its operation after years of deficits. I object to the manner in which this transfer was carried out as, from what I can learn from the documents, it is almost an accomplished fact and the operation of these wireless communications is now in the hands of international financiers. I believe the government has made a bad bargain. The Minister of Justice the other day referred to the fact that we were getting rid of a liability. I do not think the minister was correct in making that statement because the fact is that although money was lost for a considerable period, during the years 1927 and 1928 economies were effected which enabled a considerable surplus to be shown. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, the beam service was handed over to private interests at a time when the government was losing money in the operation of the cable service between the Pacific coast and Australia. I do not know whether it was the Post Office Department or the Department of Marine and Fisheries, but some department issued a license and entered into an agreement with a private company to operate the beam service between this country and Aus-

tralia. Has there ever been a more absurd or less business-like transaction than that? The government handed over this service to a private corporation to compete with the government in the operation of a utility which had been operated at a loss, but which might under the circumstances have been operated with great success. According to section 18 of the report, the gentlemen who were appointed to inquire into this matter claimed that no crisis had arisen.

I would ask the Postmaster General to refer this matter to one of the standing committees of the house. If that were done the gentlemen who were present in an advisory capacity at the conferences, such as Mr. Edwards of the Department of Marine and Fisheries and Mr. Gaboury of the Post Office Department, could appear before the committee and state the full details of the situation. Evidently the Postmaster General is not in a position at the present time to give the information to the house which the house has a right to expect, and I am going to ask the Postmaster General to refer this matter to the committee on railways, canals and telegraph lines instead of referring it to the committee of the whole.

Motion agreed to and the house went into committee on the bill, Mr. Johnston in the chair.

On section 1—Power to consent to sale.

Mr. HEAPS: Would the Postmaster General tell us who Mr. Brown is?

Mr. VENIOT: I cannot see that there is very much importance attached to the name of Mr. Brown; I do not know who the gentleman is but I will endeavour to find out.

Mr. HEAPS: Will the Postmaster General allow this to stand until he obtains that information?

Mr. LAPOINTE: What has Mr. Brown to do with this bill?

Mr. HEAPS: He has a great deal to do with it.

Mr. VENIOT: He is not connected with the department at all.

Mr. HEAPS: All the more reason why we should know who he is.

Mr. VENIOT: If the hon. member has any suspicions he had better express them.

Mr. HEAPS: The information appears in the correspondence that a Mr. Brown was in Canada during 1927. He was in negotiation with certain officials of the government, and