

Private Bills

Mr. Gillis: You have not heard it yet.

Mr. Fulton: On a point of order, might I perhaps be allowed to say that it seems to me difficult to rule now that a matter arising directly out of a previous debate in connection with this bill would not be in order at this stage. Since the hon. member has gone this far, perhaps the best way to judge the matter, Mr. Chairman, would be if you were to permit him to continue to read the editorial. Then Your Honour would have it before you and the rest of us would have it before us, and a decision could be made. It seems to be difficult to decide these points until we know what the editorial is.

The Deputy Chairman: From the remarks which have already been made by the hon. member for Cape Breton South and the introductory remarks in which he quoted part of the previous debate, I submit it is obvious to members that the editorial to which he refers does not deal with the question as to whether an extension of time should be for five years or for 10 years. We are in committee. But even though we are in committee on a private bill, and although some members might perhaps think we might relax a little bit under those circumstances, I still feel that I am bound by the standing order which states:

Speeches in committee of the whole house must be strictly relevant to the item or clause under consideration.

The item or clause under consideration is the amendment that the word "ten" in line 3 of clause 1 be deleted and the word "five" substituted therefor.

Mr. Gillis: Mr. Chairman, I will just say this. This editorial is a falsification of the records of this house. If newspapers can take material that is put on record in this house and use it in any way they see fit out in the country, it is nearly time the members of this house found out about it. I am not going to pursue the matter any further now. You will get it on Monday, on a question of privilege.

The Deputy Chairman: I do not like to butt into the speech of an hon. member on my own initiative but I think I should say that, under the circumstances which he has just described, it would be his duty to bring the matter before the house when the Speaker is in the chair, not when the house is in committee of the whole.

Mr. Gillis: How can you rule something out of order that you did not hear? It is not like you, Mr. Chairman. As a general rule you are a bit flexible and understanding. There is such a thing as getting a bad lunch sometimes.

[The Deputy Chairman.]

Mr. Knowles: Maybe he did not have any breakfast.

Mr. Gillis: With respect to the subject matter before the committee, namely an extension for 10 more years to the Quebec North Shore and Labrador Railway, may I say that of course the mistake that was made by this house was made in 1947 when the first franchise was granted. At that time I happened to be one of those who moved an amendment that the subject matter should go to a committee for the purpose of the committee studying it and determining whether or not the Canadian government should at least hold the transportation lines in that area in the interests of the Canadian people, as the province had already given away or leased the resource.

The 325 miles of that line have been completed and it is operating and making money, according to the evidence before the committee. The same company makes application to extend that line from Knob Lake to Ungava bay. Their lease does not expire until next year. They still have a year to go. They come before this committee and state that they are not sure whether a railroad is needed in there or not, that they have not made the survey and they do not know what is there. They say it may take them three to six years to do that survey. In the meantime, however, they have the whole area tied up so that no one else can go in there and do anything else with it.

Mr. Marler: I do not think that is right, surely.

Mr. Gillis: That is according to the evidence given before that committee, as I read it. If it will take them three years to do the survey and they still have another year to go, that is four years. This bill does not become operative until 1957. That means there are four years in which they do not have to do anything except survey. The hon. member down there mentioned six years; that it might take them six years before they are sure whether the line is necessary or not. In the meantime they may hold that lease for ten years and the survey may show that it would not be profitable to build the line in there for the purpose of taking out iron ore and so on. But in the meantime the franchise is let and the territory is tied up. If it is going to take them four years before they can determine whether a railway is needed, what is the hurry about the extension of the franchise? Why is everybody in such a hurry?

The hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra moved that we curtail the time to five years. I do not think his amendment is what it should be. It is cutting down the time all