

In Parliament

Federal Franchise Bill to Be Brought Down Today

Supplementary Estimates

Has Coming Election Something to Do With Them? Telephone Appropriation Causes a Lot of Discussion

Ottawa, Sept. 5.—When questions were asked, the minister of justice informed Mr. Ethier that it was correct the government had offered a reward of \$5,000 to anyone who could give any information necessary for the arrest of the dynamiters of the property of Lord Atholstan.

"Has the government," Mr. Ethier asked, "any intention of acting in the same manner in order to protect the property of an ordinary citizen as well as that of a millionaire or lord, such as Lord Atholstan?"

"The action of the government," Hon. Mr. Doherty replied, "in such matters must be and is governed by consideration of what the public interest requires and not of the personality or position of the individuals affected."

Dr. Edwards was informed that thirty-two immigration agents were employed by Canada in the United States during the last fiscal year. Their expenses amounted to \$112,042. As a result of their efforts there were 61,889 immigrants. Salaries amounted to \$51,362.

Seven Roman Catholic clergy were employed. The expenses of all these agents installed \$7,242.

On the orders of the day, Mr. Knowles asked if anything had been done to fix the price of wheat in Canada.

Sir George Foster—"The board of grain supervisors meets tomorrow in Winnipeg. I think it is possible an announcement will then be made."

Mr. Fardeau asked if investigations were being conducted in regard to the O'Connor report. Hon. Mr. Crothers replied that the parties concerned were now employed in examining the companies' books.

Franchise Bill Today.

Sir George Foster announced that the federal franchise bill would be brought down tomorrow and the house went into committee of supply on the supplementary estimates.

There was protracted discussion on a vote of \$420,000 for a branch telephone line in Cape Breton, the item leading to a general discussion of government telephones.

Mr. Carvell asked where it was the policy of the government to go into the telephone business. He questioned the advisability of the vote as establishing the principle.

Hon. Dr. Reid responded that so far as the principle was concerned it was established many years ago. When a private company could not profitably give telephone and telegraph communications to a community, the government had taken the matter into its hands. The lines in question were not in competition with any particular system in the locality.

If the government, remarked Sir Sam

TOTAL ENLISTMENTS IN CANADA TO DATE 431,455

Ottawa, Sept. 5.—Enlistments in Canada for the last two weeks of August totalled 1,500, which was a decrease of 142, as compared with the preceding two weeks. The recruiting figures by military districts, as given out by the militia department today, are as follows: London, 171; Toronto, 591; Ottawa and Kingston, 52; Montreal, 188; Quebec, 86; Maritime Provinces, 119; Manitoba, 146; British Columbia, 138; Saskatchewan, 12, and Alberta, 35. Total enlistments in the Canadian expeditionary force are now 481,455.

Hughes, is going to establish telephones and telegraphs in Nova Scotia, it is only fair they should do the same in any province in Canada.

Hon. Mr. Graham remarked that in one province (British Columbia) was getting \$219,000 for telephones when the people of the rest of Canada discovered that outlying districts were given telephone communications by the government.

They would be displeased, to put it mildly, if the government acted in that way in one part of the country it was only reasonable that they should do it everywhere.

Hon. Dr. Reid said that the government had already established telephones in some parts of New Ontario.

Brought Down Late.

Hon. Mr. Pugsley contended that the objectionable feature about the estimates was that they were brought down late.

If it had been necessary to provide for telegraph and telephone lines, provision could have been made in the main estimates.

Parliament was now called upon to vote nearly four times as much for the purpose in the supplementary as in the main estimates. "We can easily see," Mr. Pugsley declared, "that the only thing which could inspire a minister would be either that it was considered not desirable to put them into the main estimates because the largeness of the estimate would then attract public attention and then invite public criticism, or the minister sees an election is very near at hand and he is compelled to recognize the importance of putting in these items in order to secure popularity."

Hon. Dr. Reid thought such criticism was hardly fair. The supplementary estimates, he said, had been brought down some time, and were prepared before the extension of parliament was discussed in the house.

Mr. Carvell feared the government was branching out into a great scheme of public ownership the end of which no man could see. The conclusion was forced on one that there was some connection between the extension of telegraph lines and an election. Everyone graph asked to stretch, but surely the government should be the first to practice retrenchment. "It is as plain as a nose on a man's face," Mr. Carvell declared, "that the government is getting prepared for an election. I think the minister should drop all these items."

Mr. Kyte, of Richmond, strongly criticized the government in connection with the dismissal of a lineman in his county in Nova Scotia. "It is the most contemptible instance of political partisanship," Mr. Kyte said, "that has been known in the history of the country, where there have been many instances."

of it in the last four or five years. Cabinet ministers resort to the most contemptible means of persecuting those who are not of the same political faith as themselves."

Dr. Reid repudiated any charge of political partisanship and added that Mr. Kyte had charged of the dispensing of patronage in his county it would be God-help-the-Conservatives.

Mr. Chisholm (Inverness) said the government constantly discriminated against Liberals when installing telephones in Cape Breton. He said he could give a dozen instances where applications from Liberals for telephones had been refused. Even when telephones were installed there was no privacy. When you talked to your friends everyone but your friends heard what you were saying.

Mr. Carvell said that these statements proved the viciousness of this system. Every honest man, he said, should object to partisanship in the matter of installing telephones.

Mr. Carvell said he was a director of a telephone company in New Brunswick and knew what he was talking about. He asked what conditions of service on the Cape Breton lines were. How did people obtain instruments? How much did they pay? If only the favorite few were able to secure a telephone it was no wonder that the lines did not pay.

J. H. Sinclair said all he had ever heard of the Cape Breton telephone lines was that they had been thrown open at the time of the Victoria bye-election to the Conservatives.

Dr. Reid—"Every man along the line, no matter what his politics, is entitled to a telephone. If these lines are being used for political purposes, it is, of course, unfair and unjust."

Mr. Carvell—"It is not even a pretence of secrecy on the Cape Breton lines. There is not a cabinet telephone in the whole island. The public telephones are sometimes installed in people's kitchens."

Hon. Mr. Graham's Objections.

Hon. G. F. Graham objected to an expenditure of \$272,000 throughout the dominion for telegraph and telephone systems. A large part of this money would, he said, be expended for new work. He believed \$60,000 would be sufficient to repair the lines already in operation. "This kind of course," he said, "done, but new work should wait until after the war. He said that aeroplanes were urgently needed and that the amount of \$272,000 was expended on aeroplanes, thirty-eight could be supplied for overseas service. Even \$1,000 of the estimate was used to effect necessary repairs, the balance would supply thirty aeroplanes."

A. J. Davidson defended the Cape Breton telephone lines, which, he said, were serving a very useful purpose. He was amazed at Mr. Chisholm's statement with reference to partisanship in installing telephones.

Dr. Chisholm—"I was amazed myself."

Dr. Davidson thought there must be some mistake. Of course the government could not install telephones for people who lived at great distances from the main line, even private corporations refuse to do this.

Dr. Chisholm said that Mr. Davidson had no right to assume that he was mistaken in his statements as he knew nothing whatever about conditions in this district. He could give a dozen instances where Liberals had been discriminated against in the installation of telephones.

Dr. Reid told the committee that the charge for a telephone was \$4.50 a year for each half mile of distance from the main line. If the telephone was on the main line it was for public use and those who used it paid the regular toll.

Mr. Morphy commented that the discussion seemed to be more or less of a family quarrel among the members from Nova Scotia. He suggested that if the money were not required in Nova Scotia it should go to establishing telephone lines in Ontario. Eventually, however, the vote of \$6,979 for telegraph and telephone lines in Nova Scotia was carried.

Whole System Wrong.

The committee then turned to a vote of \$3,000 for an extension line to Kouchibouguac in New Brunswick. Mr. Carvell again protested. The whole system, he said, was wrong. There was no reason why the government should embark in public facilities, whether in New Brunswick or any other part of the country.

Mr. Robideaux, a Conservative member from New Brunswick, advised the department of public works to pay no attention "to this hollering." The government should see that the public got a good service.

Hon. Mr. Graham said the government was not using their best endeavors to preserve the finances of the government to carry on the war. If the people had

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no confidence in the sincerity of the government in regard to economy they must not be surprised.

An Election Expediency.

Mr. F. B. Carvell thought it strange that on the eve of an election the government found it necessary to spend a quarter of a million dollars on telegraph and telephone lines. The government, he said, never expected to get any revenue out of these systems. "The lines as constructed, were largely to remote districts. He thought this expenditure was planned to make things a little

easier for certain friends of the minister at the coming elections.

Dr. Reid merely stated that the government was not building any new lines, confining its operations to the extension of those already in existence.

Mr. Carvell asked for some information, which Dr. Reid was unable to supply. He said he was asking questions and was going to continue to do so, because he wanted the public to know what an awful system was being foisted upon them.

The item was allowed to stand until more information was obtained and the house closed for recess.

In Quebec.

An item of \$3,500 for telephone lines in the parishes of Ste. Rose, St. Louis, St. Cyprien and St. Las, in the county of Dorchester, was considered after the recess. H. Boulay, of Rimouski, declared that if telephone lines were needed anywhere they were needed between Matane and Gaspé, a distance of two hundred miles in a district where the people were far from civilization.

Mr. Edmund Proulx, of Prescott, asked if there were not private telephone lines in the county of Dorchester. Hon. Albert Sevigny declared that there were certain parishes in this county where there were neither telegraphs or telephones and where the people were fifteen miles from a railway. These were new parishes.

A. K. MacLean, of Halifax, declared that this was pretty poor ground for the government to establish telephone systems. There were scores of places in Canada much more situated than those parishes of Dorchester. These telephones votes were a very serious matter and constituted a departure from the settled policy of the government. At a certain time and in a certain portion of Canada such lines were necessary. That time had passed and the government should go out of the telephone business.

Dr. Reid declared that it had been the policy to establish telephone lines

for the past thirty or forty years. From time to time it became necessary to extend these.

Mr. Carvell asked what lines were to be extended in Dorchester county that morning of election promises. Dr. Reid replied that it was a new parish.

Mr. MacLean declared that Dorchester was one of the best and oldest settled counties in Canada.

Dr. Reid admitted that the telephone system might be a new policy. In past years telegraph lines had been established, but he believed that telephones were preferable because everybody could use them.

An Election Promise.

Mr. Tobin, of Wolfe, declared that the minister of inland revenue, Mr. Severy, had said that if it had not been for the promises made during the election in February last, this item would never have appeared in the estimates. Mr. Sevigny retorted that he had only made one promise. Mr. Tobin retorted that the election had been in February and that the engineers' recommendation for these telephone lines had been made in March. If that item were for the implementing of an election promise it should be struck out.

Mr. Carvell declared that there were hundreds of families away out in the wilderness who built telephones by their own industry. "Lord knows," he said, "what the country is coming to if the government is calling upon us to vote money for the implementing of election promises." The trouble with the minister of inland revenue was that he had promised everything. He had promised telephones, bulls and a lot of other things. The country was asked to keep those promises up.

Hon. Frank Oliver declared the policy had been to give telegraphic communication to outlying points of strategic importance, but never to provide purely local telegraphic communications. The pioneer settlers of the Peace river had communicated with the outside, but when

This is the Buckle



it came to local communication among themselves they had to undertake the cost of them.

DR. CLARK WILL RUN IF THERE IS NATIONAL GOVERNMENT.

Calgary, Alta., Sept. 5.—If a national government is formed and if a non-partisan convention of Red Deer riding, supporting such national government, is of opinion that he is likely to be the most acceptable candidate, Dr. Michael Clark will consent to run again in the constituency which he has represented for the last nine years. That is the information contained in a letter sent by Dr. Clark to Edward Michener, of Red Deer, leader of the Alberta Conservative party, the full text of which is published today by the Calgary Herald. Dr. Clark makes it clear, in his letter, that he will not be a candidate unless these two conditions are fulfilled.

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