

*Corporations and Labour Unions*

country are subject to the law. The situation is not the same as that with regard to express companies. There are only two express companies in the country and they are both subject to the same kind of requirements and to all practical intents and purposes they are completely controlled in Canada, wherever the ownership may be. However, the telephone companies are much different. It seems to me—and I am not trying to put this matter on any other basis than that of equity and fairness—that the same law should apply equally to these legal persons or that there should not be one law for the poor and another law for the rich even in the field of corporations. It seems to me that this amendment is going to impose no great hardship upon the Bell Telephone Company or the B.C. Telephone Company, unless they have something to hide. I therefore hope the minister could reconsider the matter and accept the very reasonable amendment of my hon. friend from Hull.

**Mr. Fulton:** May I make a correction in what was said because otherwise I think it might leave a wrong impression. The hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate suggested that I said all other telephone companies would be required to report. I do not think that could be taken from what I said. What I did say was that the only telephone companies exempt from the requirements of this act are those reporting under the Railway Act. However, this must be read subject to head 16 of the schedule which sets a size limit with respect to assets and annual revenue, which also determines whether or not there is an obligation to report. Indeed, I am informed that the great majority of the telephone companies that do not report to the board of transport commissioners are well below that size limit and therefore would not be required to report under this bill, so we are far from having one law for large corporations and another for all the small ones.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I concede the minister's point but—

**Mr. Fulton:** For instance, in the province of Ontario there are approximately 300 small telephone companies of which some 80 per cent operate fewer than 500 telephones each, and obviously none of them would have to report by virtue of head 16 of the schedule.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Would the minister think that a telephone company with 500 telephones would not have assets of \$500,000? Even one telephone costs quite a lot of money these days.

**Mr. Fulton:** I doubt it, and certainly I would not think they would have an annual revenue of \$500,000.

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

**Mr. Fulton:** No, I think my hon. friend is confused. It is a limit of \$500,000 with respect to revenue and \$250,000 with respect to assets.

**Mr. Howard:** Mr. Chairman, in the initial stages we expressed on clause 3 the opinion that no matter how iniquitous the bill may be it should still apply fairly and justly to all corporations, and in that sense we would support the idea of the amendment that all telephone companies be required to report. If anybody is going to report, let us make everybody report to the same organization. That was the gist of our views expressed on clause 3. I am not going into our arguments and reasons again. We are in favour of this amendment, even though it is only a small, faltering step toward the objective of bringing all of these exempt corporations under the same law.

**The Deputy Chairman:** Is the committee ready for the question?

**Mr. Regier:** No. The minister has pointed out that he does not want to force duplication of reporting on companies. I wonder whether he can tell the committee how much reporting the B.C. Telephone Company actually does to the board of transport commissioners.

**Mr. Fulton:** I have placed before the committee in summary form the reporting requirements as contained in the Railway Act. I do not think I can enlighten the committee beyond that. That is where the information is found.

**Mr. Regier:** If I may pursue this matter for a moment, the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate asked the minister how much of the B.C. Telephone Company is Canadian owned and the minister has not yet replied to that question. The minister now says that he has read the pertinent items in the Railway Act. However, as I recall, everything he read merely enabled the board of transport commissioners to require certain things and called upon the company to supply the information if required. I want to know whether the board of transport commissioners has ever requested a balance sheet or operational statement from the B.C. Telephone Company.

As I indicated earlier, I believe the board of transport commissioners does not have the necessary machinery to meet this need, and I believe the hon. member for Hull and the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate are perfectly correct in their assertion that this provision is going to require many telephone companies to report, while on the other hand the board of transport commissioners will likely pursue its policy of doing nothing about