

Bell Canada

my Conservative friends will probably be flabbergasted at this, but the profit from Saskatchewan's telephone service in 1967 was \$8,322,000. By 1970 the profits of Saskatchewan government telephones had grown to \$11,718,000. By 1976 they had grown to \$19,061,000.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): The hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Hnatyshyn) on a point of order.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: I know the hon. member would like to entertain a question from me. I am very interested in his most informative figures and if he would permit a question I would appreciate it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Would the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom) entertain a question from the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar?

Mr. Nystrom: Sure.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: I know the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville is a great advocate of large profits for corporations, whether they be public or private. He seems to be extolling this view at great length here today. On the basis of logic and consistency I wonder if it is his view, having regard to the incredible profits made by this company in Saskatchewan, that the money should in fact be returned to the consumer across Saskatchewan in the form of lower rates and greater facilities, or does he feel that this money should go into the general treasury of the province of Saskatchewan?

Mr. Nystrom: I am really happy that the hon. member asked that question, Mr. Speaker, because I might have forgotten to speak about that. I think those profits should be used for a number of things, and I shall probably spend the rest of my time telling the hon. member what they should be used for and what they have been used for in the past.

The annual report refers to all of the rural telephone services in Saskatchewan. It is a really good service which cannot be compared to any other in the country. They use a lot of that money for their rural telephone service. They use a lot more money for communication into northern Saskatchewan. I could in some detail tell the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar how my constituent, Neil Byers, as minister in charge of telephones, has improved things in northern Saskatchewan. They have also spent money on cable television in the province. They have made all kinds of renovations and repairs to the existing system. They have participated in the Trans-Canada service. They provide very good salaries and working conditions to their employees, and so on.

Most important of all, Mr. Speaker, they have returned most of their profits to the people of Saskatchewan through the lowest rates of any telephone system in Canada. I am sure that all members of the House would be very interested in knowing how public ownership can be so efficient. It can have the lowest rates in Canada and still make a profit, and it can invest those profits in Saskatchewan, not in the United States

or Mexico or elsewhere. They pay their workers decent salaries.

I have before me an article comparing telephone rates in August of 1976, which is the most recent data I have been able to accumulate. I would ask all hon. members, particularly those on the other side of the House, to listen to some of these rates.

In the city of Regina residence phones cost \$5 a month, business phones cost \$11.85. In the city of Regina there are 72,400 phones. Let me compare those rates with those of private telephone companies in other cities and see how much more inefficient these private companies are and how much more they charge.

The city of Halifax has 96,000 phones; residence phones cost \$8.95 and business phones \$26. In Moncton where there are 52,000 telephones, private phones cost \$7.65 and business phones \$22.30. They are even trampling on their business friends. That is what private enterprise does. In the city of Montreal there are almost 1,400,000 phones; private phones cost \$7.45 and business phones \$22.10. In the city of Ottawa there are 338,000; private phones cost \$6.55, business phones \$18.70. In St. John's, Newfoundland, poor little Newfoundland with all their unemployed and below average incomes, there are 46,000 telephones; private phones cost \$8 and business phones \$23.

In Saint John, New Brunswick, there are 47,000 phones; private phones cost \$7.65 and business phones \$22.30. In Sherbrooke, Quebec, there are 82,000 telephones; private phones cost \$6.20 and business phones \$17. In Toronto with 1,400,000 telephones, private phones cost \$7.45 and business phones \$22.10. In Vancouver with 511,000 phones, private phones cost \$8.05 and business phones \$24.20. In every case that I have cited today the rates are much higher than those in Saskatchewan, which I remind the House are \$5 for private phones and \$11.85 for business phones.

Mr. Paproski: What about the city of Edmonton?

Mr. Nystrom: Theirs is a publicly owned service as well, another plus for public ownership. Edmonton has 207,000 phones and a private phone costs \$5.80. I am so happy to hear the hon. member for Edmonton Centre (Mr. Paproski) arguing the case for public ownership and saying how great it is in the city of Edmonton.

Mr. Paproski: That is not what I said. I just wanted to know what the cost was.

Mr. Nystrom: Telephones probably cost a few cents more in Alberta since the Conservative party is worse at running public institutions than we are. Winnipeg, Manitoba is the only place that has lower rates than Edmonton and Regina. There is a publicly owned telephone system in Winnipeg, which has a rate of \$4.90 for a private telephone, and a business phone rate of \$11.65. If my memory serves me correctly, it was the grandfather of the former premier Duff Roblin who instigated