

tage, and probably is, to the great newspapers of this country which want to gather news cheaply from Great Britain and other countries of Europe, and also to our great manufacturing and commercial centres. But I want to say on behalf of the farmers of this country that there are other things of much greater importance to them than any of these fads. How many people in this country use a cable line? I venture to say not 5 per cent of the people of Canada.

Mr. LEMIEUX. Why?

Mr. LALOR. Because they have no use for it.

Mr. LEMIEUX. Because the rates are too high.

Mr. LALOR. Even if the rates were low, they would not use it. I speak as a business man. Occasionally I send a cablegram, but it is of very little importance to me whether we have a state-owned cable line or not, because I use the cable so seldom; and as far as 95 per cent of the people of this country are concerned, I do not believe they are at all interested in cheap cable messages or in a state-owned cable. They would not use it and it would be of little or no value to them. The same thing applies to the nationalization of the telegraph lines. How many of the people of this country use the telegraph lines? I venture to say that 90 per cent of the people of this country do not send one telegram in 12 months. They are of no importance to the farmers of this country. Are the telegraph rates high? You can send a telegram from the town in which I live to Montreal for 25 cents, and you can send a night letter of I think 50 words for 25 cents.

Is there any general demand for anything cheaper than that? Would it be any great advantage to the people of this country that it should be any cheaper? It may be an advantage to a few people who are interested in telegraph lines to a very great extent, but the great majority of our people are not interested in the question whatever. I believe that private capital and enterprise should develop, not only the cable and telegraph lines, but the telephone lines as well. In the county which I represent, rural telephone companies have covered the entire district with telephones. They give the farmers a telephone for \$12 per year, and I doubt very much, if in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, where the province owns these lines, the telephone service is as cheap, or any cheaper at any rate, than it is throughout the province of Ontario, where local telephone companies have been formed, and are operating efficiently. I say, Mr. Speaker, that this question is of very little importance to the great majority of the people. It may be

an advantage to the few, but it is not an advantage to the many. Gentlemen who come from the cities, from the commercial centres, may be interested and they do advocate these schemes in the House from time to time, but let me tell the Postmaster General that the farmers of Canada are interested in something of very much more importance to them than projects of this kind, which have been brought before the House. They are interested to-day in a rural mail delivery.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. LALOR. If this government wants to do something in the interest of the farmers, that is a matter which they might properly undertake. The farmers are not even interested so much in the parcel post system concerning which we have heard a great deal. Is there any reason why parcels should be carried from Toronto to Vancouver for the same price as they would be carried for, from the town in which I live to Toronto? I do not believe the government should go into that business, and compete with the express companies at the same rate throughout the whole of Canada. The former Postmaster General gave the farmers a little taste of what rural mail delivery is like. He adopted a system of rural mail delivery upon the main mail routes, and I want to tell him that the farmers who received their newspapers and letters daily upon these routes are so interested in it, that in other parts of the province—and I can speak more particularly of Ontario than of any other province, because I am more familiar with it—are strongly asking for the benefits of rural mail delivery and they will never be satisfied until they get it.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. LALOR. I hope that the Postmaster General and the government will not delay any time in giving to the Ontario farmers a proper system of rural mail delivery. Why should they not have it? The farmers contribute to the revenues of Canada to a very great extent, as we all know. They produce the wealth of this country, and it is upon the farmers that we mainly depend in Canada.

Mr. SPEAKER. I would like to remind the hon. gentleman that he is wandering from the question, which is that of cable rates.

Mr. LALOR. Perhaps I am a little out of order in discussing the questions of rural mail delivery and telephone nationalization, but if I have trespassed it is because others have trespassed before me. I want to say in conclusion that the farmers want from this government rural mail delivery in preference to any of these fads