

Private Bills

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm.

Mr. Pigeon: As concerns especially the province of Quebec, there has been some improvement as regards the bilingual staff and the promotion of French speaking Canadians, but this improvement is insufficient and, moreover, there are still complaints about bilingualism as applied in the telephone book. Things are not perfect, and so if the company wishes to get the sympathy of some members in this house, if the company wants us to co-operate in helping it to increase the number of its directors so its profits will be increasingly exorbitant, it might start by granting adequate promotions to bilingual Canadians, especially in the province of Quebec, in order that the public of that province be adequately served, for it is entitled to be attended to in its own language, be it one or the other. Such is its right.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I wanted to avail myself of this opportunity—

Mr. Côté (Longueuil): Order.

Mr. Pigeon: Mr. Speaker, I request your co-operation. I think that my intentions are well known and that I am entitled to express my opinion. I do not think too highly of the remarks of the hon. member who remained seated. The hon. member for Lotbinière rose to his feet when he tried to make his point. The hon. member for Longueuil has no right to take advantage of the fact he is on the government side to make remarks contrary to the rules of the house.

I know the company is powerful and it sometimes uses the appropriate means to get rid of persons it finds embarrassing. I say that because it is now time, in 1964, that the company's charter be entirely reviewed, at least until it is taken over by certain provinces as a public enterprise. I think it is urgent that its charter be entirely revised.

I remember, Mr. Speaker, that a few years ago, the company decided to build a telephone exchange in the town of Repentigny, though it had not even asked the municipal authorities for the necessary permit. Building was started without the previous consent of the civic authorities in Repentigny by just using—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I once more ask my hon. friend to limit his remarks to the bill now before us.

[Mr. Choquette.]

[Text]

Mr. Francis: May I ask, do I interpret the hon. member's remarks as objecting to the head office of this corporation being in the province of Quebec, in the city of Montreal? Would he prefer to see it outside that province, outside that city?

[Translation]

Mr. Pigeon: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member had visited the province of Quebec and more particularly the city of Montreal, a little more frequently, he would see that the Bell Telephone Company controls the whole city of Montreal, and a vast area in the province of Quebec.

I am surprised at the hon. member's standing up so vigorously for that company. Does he have shares or an interest in it? Personally, my only concern is to defend the interests of the people of Quebec, and I am speaking from that angle only. Moreover, I know that a great number of hon. members share my views.

I remember that, during a former session—and I see some hon. members who agreed with me—

Mr. Dupuis: Never.

Mr. Pigeon: I made speeches against the Bell Telephone Company of Canada. I made them in the public interest, and I think the time has come for the hon. members to muster enough courage to express their views, at least as far as the federal jurisdiction and charter of this powerful company are concerned, because this company is the most powerful monopoly, second only to that of Mr. Khrushchev in U.S.S.R. In my opinion, it is urgent that the federal government should refer the charter of this company to the committee so that it can be revised.

[Text]

Mr. Lloyd Francis (Carleton): I cannot allow the remarks of the hon. member for Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm (Mr. Pigeon) to go unanswered. I think he has made a despicable attack on a thoroughly reputable organization which is attempting to do a job. I would point out to the hon. member that the operations of this company extend substantially beyond the confines of one province, though the head office is maintained in one province. I must tell the hon. member that if attacks of this kind on businesses such as the Bell Telephone Company are kept up they will do nothing but harm to the province of Quebec, whose interest he is supposed to have at heart. I regret having to speak in