## ERECO DENGLEY WOLD BY Florence Warden

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS

(CONTINUED FROM LAST

## CHAPTER XI



HERE was no time to say more, but it was enough. With a glance and a nod James Ince left the footman, and crossing the wide hall, rejoined the lively group near the door. St. Quintin tried

to get more than the convention "good-bye" from Miss Densley, but he was foiled by Madame Leblanc. who stood with her niece until the guests had left the house

and got into the motor car. St. Quintin drove himself, and Mr. Alverthorpe sat beside him.
"Charming people!" said the vicar, who had enjoyed his evening immense-"Have you known them long?" asked

St. Quintin. "I've known Mrs, Mortimer for many years, before her husband died, in fact. The others, except, of course, her old pupil, Miss Dorcas Lane-I mean Dens-

ey-I never met before today." Wonderful story that of the discovery of the young lady by her French relations!" said St. Quintin, anxious to hear how it struck a stranger.

"Ah, one meets so many wonderful stories in the course of one's experience, that I often think a volume of my own ices would be more wonderful reading than any ro "I dare say," returned St. Quintin,

He was not sorry that his occupation as driver allowed him to give short answers, for, indeed, he was much perplexed and disturbed, and not in a condition to hold a conversation with any one but James Ince, who was sitting with the chauffeur in the back seat of

The vicar, nowever, was communicative after his evening's enjoyment, and he went on to relate that it was through the fact that the Leblancs were deeply interested in East End mission them by his old friend, Mrs. Mortimer.

work that he had been introduced to This was a new and rather surprising view of the French relations of Miss Densley, but St. Quintin heard it with interest, and decided to make further inquiries on the point at a later It was not until he had taken his

new acquaintance to his home that he was able to unburden himself to James Ince, who took the vacant seat beside his friend before they restarted. Well, what do you think of the Lebancs?" he then asked as carelessly

"Charming people," replied Ince, at St. Quintin looked round at him quick-

ly and frowned.
"Why do you say that, like a parrot?" he asked, with a snap. James Ince glanced at his friend from under his cap. "What do you want me to say?" he

asked, dryly. "I want you to tell me the truth as to what you think of them." "Well, then, I think they have some very nice friends." "And about themselves?"

James Ince was silent. Then he asked "Did you ever meet a man named "Good heavens!" exclaimed St. Quintin. And then he added quickly:
"Don't talk to me any more till we
get back to my rooms, there's a good

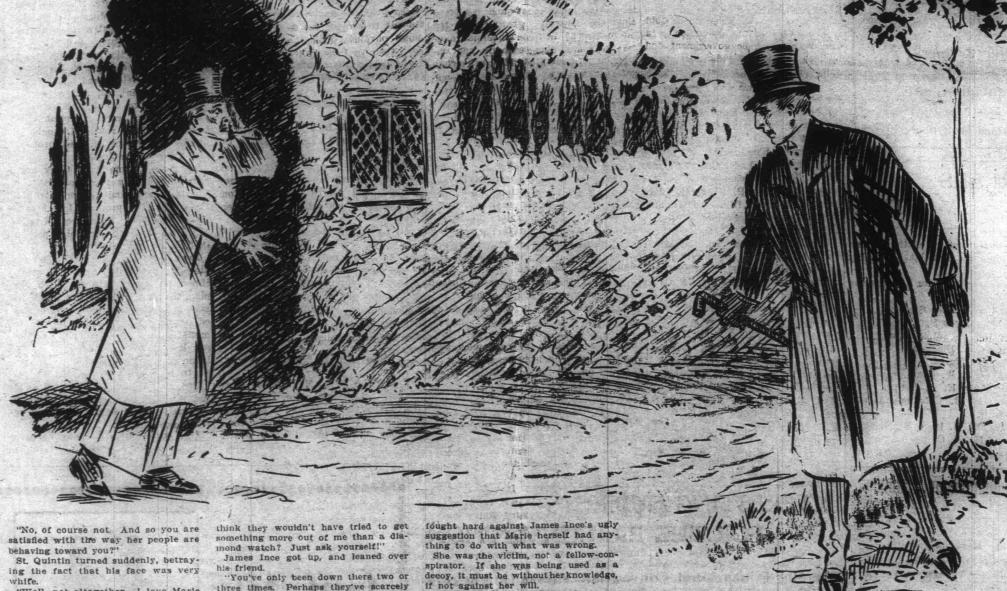
was not until they were safely shut in St. Quintin's rooms that the year host turned to his fraud and said: "Now, then, why did you ask me about Burdock? Did you know him?"

"No. But I knew a man who knew him very well, and who was with him on the evening of the day he disappeared. It seems Burdock was on his way to Wimbledon, and that he was going to keep an appointment which was an important one, connected with money. It seems he expected to marry

a rich wife."
"Well," said St. Quintin, turning his back on the other, o pretense of lighting a cigarette, but really to hide the agitation caused by these words.
"It's odd, isn't it, that they should have known him down there; that he should have called there in fact, on the very day he disappeared, and thatwell, there is a rich girl there, isn't there?" Who told you he called at the

mean, what has that to do with "It's rather odd, isn't it, that he should have said what he did-something about expecting to marry a rich wife-that he should then have called at Briar Lodge, where the rich Miss Densley is living?"

"It's a coincidence, nothing more."



"Well, not altogether. I love Marie herself more every moment that I pass in her society. She is frank, maidenly, gay, charming. But I don't care for her relations, and I'm rather surprised to find that anybody else

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James Ince hesitated. "Don't you think," he said presently, with some reluctance, "that if you condemn the relations, you must con-

demn the niece, too?" "Indeed I don't. And what I want to do is to separate Miss Densley from her relations-to marry her and take her away from them."

"Will she consent?" "I hope so." "You don't think she cares for them St. Quintin looked disturbed.

"I'm afraid she does." "Then will she leave them for you?" Silence on St. Quintin's part. "If not, what will you do?"

St. Quintin glared at him. "She knows nothing of what you what will you do?" The younger man walked restlessly

up and down the room. "I don't know yet. All I'm absolutely certain of is that I love her madly, passionately, and that I shall never rest till I've made her my wife." "You don't think there's anything wrong about the girl, too?"

St. Quintin turned upon him with rage in his eyes. "I'm absolutely sure of that too. She is modest, good, sweet, everything that a woman should be. I won't hear Ince put up his hand.

"Indeed, you'll hear nothing against any of them from me," he said quietly. "It was you, I think, who first said you did not care for the relations, and accused me of parroting when I called St. Quintin looked confused and

abashed. "Well, the fact is, I suppose I'm so much in love that I scarcely know how to speak rationally when she is in any way concerned. But the fact is, I have grave doubts about her people-the French ones. I'll tell you an odd expedence I had the first evening I went down there."

And he told, straightforwardly and And he told, straightforwardly and shortly, without dweiling upon any point unduly, the strange story of his nearing the cries of "help! murder!" of his seeing the window close, and of his going back to the house, and having it preved to him, to the satisfaction of his own eyes, that there was no one in the study and no trace of any crime having been committed there.

James lince listened very quietly, and made no comment whatever when he had heard all. It was left for his friend to say sharply:

had heard all. It was left for his friend to say sharply:
"Well, what do you think of it?"
"It looks," replied Ince, caimly, "as if they made a business of offering their niece in marriage to the man who is able to pay the most, in jewelry, or perhaps in other things. Now, doesn't it?"
St. Quintin was trembling.
"I can't think it's quite as bad as that," he said hoarsely. "What I think is that this man is covetous—indeed, he confessed as much—and that he is trying to—to—to".

"Well, what do you think he's trying to do?"

St. Quintin made a gesture of despair.
"I think you're right," said he, at last, desperately. "He's holding out, with the intention of inducing her to marry the man who pays the most handsomely for the privilege. Yet why a man who must certainly be well off himself"—

a man who must certainly be well off himself"—
"How do you know that?" asked Ince, quickly.
"Look at the house, the servants, the ladies' jewelry and dresses!"
"Might they not all be part of the plot to make her pass for an helress when the ladies' jewelry and dresses!"
"St. Quintin drew a long breath.
"There must be money somewhere," he said. "Either she has plenty, or he or his wife. For think of the enormous sums he would have to get out of everybody to keep up such an establishment! And all he gets out of his niece's admirers is a few trinkets."
"You mean as far as you know."
St. Quintin, trembling so much that he had to support himself against the table, stared at his friend.
"Oh, no, no, by heaven! It's not possible! You mean that they use Marie, that lovely, charming girl, as a decoy! A"— He thrust his hand through his hair in a stupor of incredulous dismay."No, no, no. They know I'm well off. If they had been what you say, do you

begun the bleeding process properly The other started up with a cry. "By Jove! I won't believe it, I won't. I

-I must go down at once, see Marie, and find out the truth. She must know mething about the way of life of her mcle and aunt. She"-The effect of that monosyllable upon St. Quintin was paralyzing, for it sum

med up all the incredulity, all the ugly conviction, which had been ripening in the mind of the elder man on the way back from Briar Lodge that night. St. Quintin made a rush for his friend

"Hush Be quiet, there's a good chap. All I meant was that you must not now be content to let things slide, you must find out, once for all, how much the girl knows,"

mean, nothing of anything wrong, I'll

"Then, if you were to suggest to her that there is something shady about the place, and put a few plain facts before her-perhaps you'll open her eyes, al-ways supposing they're not open al-ready, and you can get her to choose between you, on the one hand, and these people, who are probably not her relations at all, on the other."

"But Mrs. Mortimer was satisfied!"
"An old lady is easily satisfied, especially if she's good," said Ince, with decision. "Look here, let me go down with you the next time you visit Briar "That would rouse their suspicions at once. I saw the old Frenchman looking

at you askance."
"The very reason why you must take me again. If he thinks I go in the character of detective we shall soon find out something. Either he will shut up altogether, or he will do something to satisfy us of his bona fides. Don't you gree with me?"
"Perhaps," faltered St. Quintin, who much overcome with the ter-

rors of the situation to be able to think Have you had an invitation to go "A general invitation, that's all."

"A general invitation, that's all."

"Well, this is Monday. Shall we go down together the day after tomorrow?"

"All right."

"And will you promise not to write and give them any warning of our coming?"

And will you promise not to write and give them any warning of our coming?"

St. Quintin was up in arms at once.

"I must write a note to Marie, of course," he began.

Then James Ince showed himself in hit true colors, dropped the gentle, easy, earnest tone, and bucame abrupt and dictatorial.

"Unless you give me your word of honor," he said, weighing heavily on every word, "not to write one word either to Miss Densley or to any member of her circle or household, between now and Wednesday, I shall put the matter into the ha 's of the police."

St. Quintin, pale as the dead, stared incredulously at his friend.

"You would dare!" he said in a hoarse voice. "Against my wish and command?" voice. "Against my wish and command?"
"I would, and I will. So now you understand. I know for a certainty that these people are wrong 'uns. Whether the girl herself knows it or not I can't tell. I should think she must have suspicions, though. And, in any case, I think if you had any sense you'd cut the whole lot."
"Never. I'll cut anybody else you like, but if you ask me to give up Marie—"
"I don't. I say it would be wiser that's all. However, we needn't discuss that now. An! I want is your word of honor not to write to her or communicate with her till after Wednesday. Is it a bargain?"
"All right," said St, Quintin, hoarsely, as, with bent head and uncertain steps, he staggered across the room and threw himself into a chair.

CHAPTER XII ST. QUINTIN passed the next two days in a state of such anxiety as he had never here. Ready as he had been to see that there was something strange, to say the least of it, about the household at Briar Lodge, where all seemed so prosperous and yet was so full of mystery, he

decoy, it must be without her knowledge, if not against her will. He did not scoff, as Ince did, at the story told by the girl, and though thought some points of it were open inquiry, it seemed to him perfectly it

great rise in life as that experienced by

Miss Densley.

However, deeply as he was hurt by his friend's suspicions of the girl and entirely as he rejected them on his own account, he had sense enough to understand that he could not do better than allow the cooler-headed Ince to see, at least, what he could do to investigate

the mystery of Briar Lodge. So when his friend arrived on the Wednesday afternoon, on a dull and misty September day, and peremptorily forbade the use of the motor caron their journey, he was submissive, asked few ns, as he got no satisfactory answers, and accompanied Ince to the rail-way station in a hansom without much

one answer he insisted upon getting. however, before they started.
"Have you learned anything fresh about these people?" he asked point-blank

"Not a thing," replied Ince, promptly.
"And I've been making the most of my time, too."

This was satisfactory as far as it went. The Leblanes might be shady, but they were not notorious, evidently. So the two young men went down to Briar Heath together in a very different nood from that in which they had paid

their first visit.

When they reached the outer gate of the garden, which was a good way from the house, Ince stopped short and said:

"Look here, will you mind if I go up to the house by myself? Will you wait for me here? Walk up and down this way without passing that gap in the way, without passing that gap in the trees where they could see you from the windows. I won't keep you waiting a nute longer than I can help." St. Quintin was alarmed.

But what are you going to do?" said he.

"Nothing whatever. At least, nothing to upset any one. I'm going to make a few inquiries, that's all. And I'll answer for it they will not reach any ears you need mind."

Puzzled and distressed, St. Quintin, feeling that he had let himself in for more than he had bargained for, reluctantly consented, and, turning back, strolled along the footpath under the trees that spread out their branches from the gardens of the stately row of detached houses that bordered the heath.

from the gardens of the stately row of detached houses that bordered the heath.

Meanwhile James Ince went quickly up the drive and rang the bell. As he had hoped, it was the footman he knew who opened the door.

"Is Monsieur Leblanc at home?" he asked without appearing to recognize the man.

"No, sir" said the footman, promptly. James Ince raised his eyebrows.

"Really not at home?" he asked in the lowest of voices.

The servant hesitated.

"well, sir, that was the message I was told to give every one, and he won't see anybody, I know."

"Where is he, as a matter of fact?"
The man answered as before, reluctantly, as if every word were being drawn out of him with tortures.

"He's in his study, sir, or his laboratory, the doesn't allow anybody to disturb him when he's in there."

"Laboratory, eh? And where's that?"

"Oh, it's at the back of the house, sir. Yes, on that side,"
The affirmative was in answer to Ince's curlous movement of the head to his left.

"Can you introduce me into the room where he is, saving that it's a gantle. his left.

"Can you introduce me into the room where he is, saying that it's a gentleman come on inportant business?"

"Oh, no, sir; I durgn't do that. Look here, Mr. Ince, you wouldn't wish to do a poor chap any harm, now, would you? I feel grateful-like to you, seeing you're a friend of the gentleman that spoke for me, and got me off for that affair of the sealskin jackets"—

"And hard work he had, too, you rascal!" rascall ""Well sir, believe me, if I could do what you want, I'd do it. But I can't. In the first place, Monsieur Leblanc locks himself m."
"Well, will you tell me just what you're doing here?"
"I'm simply a servant, sir, nothing else, honor bright."
"Come, Saunders that won't do for

"He was shocked to see his friend stagger out through the garden gate of Briar Lodge, pale as death." me. Unless you're quite frank, it's of blanc looks 'em over himself to see no use expecting me to hold my whose presents are the best, and that

"Well, sir, as for the first question I can only say, 'blest if I know my-self who or what they are.' Everything looks square. Plenty of money; highly respectable visitors. Every-

"Then, now, tell me the truth about 'Well, if you must have it, I'm here -to watch for the other party in the

"Oh, there's another party, is there?" "Yes, sir. And you've heard about him, right enough. It's Bob Gurney, that got seven years for stealing at a bank-what they call 'bezziement, sir." "Oh, so he's the partner of these peo-ple? Does he come here?" "No, sir. I keep him posted up."

"Well, there's a lot of gentlemen comes here who're all after Miss Densley and her money. For she's got noney-lots of it, by what I can make out-and land up in Lincolnshire, too."

"Yes. Well?" "They come here in swarms making up to her, for her money mostly, I think. And some of them make an awful bother because they can't marry her off-hand. Mr. Burdock, he was one of them that made a row." Burdock, eh? And what became of

Oh, Monsieur Lebland quietened him down, talked him over, as he does with them all. Oh, he's a rare one, as far as the gift of the gab goes, sir, is Monsieur Leblanc. He beats madame, and that's saying a deal." "And Burdock didn't come here

"Why, no, sir; they say nobody knows what's become of him," said Saunders, simply,
It was plain that he himself had no sort of explanation to offer of that mystery. "Did you let him out, the last time he came?"

mystery.

"Did you let him out, the last time he came?"

"No, sir. And I didn't expect to have to, for when they're angry and impatient, like what he was, asking for Monsieur Leblanc peremptory-like and sharp, I always know how it will end. For when they're like that, Monsieur Leblanc he doesn't bring them into the drawing-room where the ladles are, but he takes 'em and he taks 'em over in his study, and he lets them out himself, and sees them down to the gardengate himself, where they leaves him all smilling and good-humored. Lord, sir, I've watched 'em from the window on the stairs lots of times!"

"Then you have no suggestion to make as to what became of him."

"No, sir. I've only heard what they said free in the servanis' hall, sir, as he was keen either on the young lady or on her fortune, and so made away with himself when he was told he couldn't have her, p'r aps."

"Ah! That's the talk here, is it?"

"Among us, sir, but I've never heard any one else say so, except Monsieur Leblanc said one day he hopes Mr. Burdock hadn't done anything rash. And then the ladies all looked at each other, and Miss Densley she couldn't go on eating her breakfast after that."

"And it's not uncommen for the gentlemen who come here to go away and disappear like that?"

"Oh, no. Mr. Burdock is the only one. The rest-why Monsieur Leblanc he keeps them on by keeping them off, and they have to wait, he says, till the young lady's trustee, Mr. Williams, comes back from abroad."

"And who is he?"

"And you keep a register, you say, of all the men who come here."

"Ta don't know, sir."

"And you keep a register, you say, of all the men who come here."

"Tees, sir. What time they come, how many times, what their names are, and, if I can, I have to find out whether they bring any presents."

"Presents, eh?"

"Yes, sir. They bring presents, most

tongue about you. Who are these those that bring small presents won't have a look in, Mr. Williams or no Mr. had obtained it, they we

> "And what does Miss Densley say to all this?" "Ah, that's more than I can tell. Her maid being French and not speaking what she says. And it's likely she don't know half as much as we do of what goes on, for, you see, sir, half of the visitors have to go away when they've tell me all about it? een her uncle, without having seen

"Ah! Odd, certainly. And now, Saunders, I want you to do me a service." A about it yet."

The man looked apprehensive.

"Talk about think you ca Yes, oh, yes, Mr. Ince, and I'm sure

if I can do anything for you-in reason-and without risking the loss of my "The place must be a very remunera-tive one, for you to be so anxious to

"It's not so much the pay, but I'm doing work for a pal, you see, sir. And indeed I've done more than what I ought in telling you what I have done. And I hope you won't make no use of what I've told you against Bob Gurney, sir?" "My business is not with Gurney, but with the people here. If Gurney's mixed up in anything shady, you'd better give him the tip to drop it, for I may have

to come down upon these people, I warn "Very well, sir."
"And now for the service I spoke of.
You say Monsieur Leblanc is in his

ratory. He fiddles about with chemicals and things a good deal—his father was a great French chemist, I believe, sir—not what we call a chemist over here, but a great swell at mixing things and finding out new airs and all that, sir." "I see. Well, I'm curious to see him at his work. And you've got to contrive The man shook his head decisively.

The man shook his head decisively.

"No, sir, that's more than I could do, even if I dared. Besides, I couldn't tell you, no more than Adam, where he is at this moment. The door on the left as you go into the house—that door"—and he pointed to a door on one side of the hall as he spoke—"leads into a little corridor, with a door at the end that goes into the garden. He always keeps both doors locked and has the keys himself. On one side of the corridor, at the back of the house, is the laboratory; and on the other side, in the front, is the study. Nobody can ever tell which room he's in, and if they could, it wouldn't be possible for you to see in, for the windows are ten feet or thereabouts from the ground."

"You must manage to let me see into the rooms, all the same," said Ince, quietly. "I'm particularly anxious to see into this laboratory. So I'm going round to the back along the path between the shrubs."

"There's a side gate, sir, and it's shut and bolted on the inside."

"Then you must unboit it. And you must take me round to the back of the house, where I know there are plenty of shrubs to hide us from the ladies, if they should happen to be in the garden." The unfortunate footman looked white with consternation, but Ince went remorselessly on:

"When we get under the window,"

glanced behind him and around

Then he said in a lower tone: "If you'll go to the side gate, sir, I'll let you through. But I'm sure you won't see anything of any consequence, and the only end of it will be that I shall get the sack, while youwell, I shouldn't like to be you, sir, if Monsieur Leblanc catches you spying

"Oh, all right. I'll take the risk of that," said James Ince good-humored-aly, as he turned away and went toward the side gate.

A few minutes later he heard the footsteps of Saunders on his way to the gate to let him through. There had been a few minutes' delay, and he asked himself whether the man would dare to play him false, and, choosing to risk offending him rather than the master he evidently feared, would put the latter on his guard.

Saunders, however, when he opened the gate, looked just as before, disturbed, uneasy, and simple, like the great, clumsy, foolish, helplessly weak and lazy sort of man that he was, drifting into crime from inability to keep away from bad company rather than from native viciousness.

He unbolted the door in silence, and James Ince followed him through Half an hour later St. Quintin, who had been walking up and down, up and down, until he thought the very

errand boys looked upon him with suspicion, was shecked to see his friend stagger out through the garden sate of Briar Lodge, pale as death and with his eyes starting out of his head.
"Great heavens! What has happened?" cried St. Quintin, as he seized him by the arm, thinking he was go-

ing to have a fit of some sort. James Ince made signs with his shouth, but seemed unable to speak. He was staring out before him as if at some hideous specter that held him fixed and dumb. To his friend's entreaties, however,

he at last managed to answer with four words, uttered in a hoarse whis-"Get me-some-brandy!"

## · CHAPTER XIII

ST. QUINTIN had to support his friend as they went in search of the necessary restorative, and on the way he took care to ask him the way he took care to ask him no more questions. That something of a terrible nature had been discovered by Ince was plain enough, but, having regard to the neighburhood they were in, to the importance of the discussion which would undoubtedly arise, and to his own strong emotions on the subject which would undoubtedly arise, and to his own strong emotions on the subject of the occupants of Briar Lodge, he felt that the matter had better be postponed

They got some brandy, and when they gestion of Ince, who nedded toward the wide, open space, and thrusting his hand

through the arm of the younger man, led him in the direction he proposed. "That's better," he said then, as he drew a long breath. "I felt as if I must have air, fresh air, and lets of it."
"And now," said St. Quintin, "you'll

Ince shook his head.

"You must excuse me for a little while," said he, "I don't want to talk

"Talk about what? Surely you don't think you can leave me in the anxiety I feel! I let you so to the house—the house where Marie lives-by yourself, by your wish. I let you go without asking any questions. You come back half an hour after, looking like a corpse, and you expect me to wait! No. You must

tell me what happened,"
"Nothing happened," said James Ince, who had scarcely yet recovered his ordinary tone and manner. St. Quintin stared.

"Do you expect me to believe that?"
"Yes; nothing whatever happened.
But I saw something, or perhaps only
fancied I saw something. Anyhow, I'd
rather not talk about it just now. I may have been wrong."
"Well, you must let me have the chance of judging, too."
"Not yet. Let us get back to town

first, and we'll go over the evidence for and against quietly together.' happens. Either you must tell me the truth about what happened between your leaving me in your ordinary state

nother interview with Marie.' James Ince laid a detaining hand on

must call at Briar Lodge and get

James ince laid a detaining hand on his arm.

"You musn't to that," he said, earnestly. "If my eyes alight deceive me, Brjar Lodge is not a piece for you or any same man to call at except under police pretection."

"Good heavens! What do you mean?"

"That I believe Leblanc is a villain, and that the less you have to do with any one connected with him the better it will be for you. Look here! I'll tell you more presently, when I've made sure myself of what I suspect. In the meantime, do be warned, and take advice, and come out of 're danger zone without another moment's delay."

"No." said St. Quintin, obstinately, "I can't do that. If there is any danger about, Marie must be in it, and I must find out where she is and whether I can do anything to help her."

James Ince laid a restraining hand once more upon the arm of the younger and more impeatuous man.

"My dear fellow, you're talking onsense. What can you d? You haven't even the right to speek to her about her people."

"I don't believe they a: her rela-

TELEPHONE

Government to Ov Municipal and and Cumberson

TUESDAY, MAY 5 The general discussion on ciple of the government legislation was the chief bu the legislature today.

> After the initial proceed Calder moved that the Hou

itself into committee to co resolution respecting the fir the department of Raily Telephones and in doing so casion to discuss the gener ples of the telephone bills. phone question was one of interesting they had to this session. The necessity phones did not require ment. The steps being tal velope the system was the terest. Working on the passed at the last session, ernment had engaged ger to make an investigation port. Mr. Calder then deal qualifications of Mr. Dagge work, and stated that the i been laid on the table of t He then gave the following regarding telephones. In of this province there were phone exchanges embracia phones and 420 miles of long telephone lines. If they too sent population at 300,000 one telephone to about 92 ants and if they took into c tion the number of phones

to the rural people, there phone for 178 people. In th Manitoba their telephone sys one phone for every 28 p outside of urban districts to every 68 inhabitants. parts of the world, in where the government controlled all the telephone where there were no local pendent companies and no controlled by municipalities tria there was one phone 724 persons, in France one 500 persons, in Belgium or ery 293, in Bavaria one for persons, in Great Britain of ery 116, in Germany one 108 and in Switzerland one

170 persons, In the United States a they had one phone for ty inhabitants.

In Manitoba there are 1 of long distance lines comp our 420 miles. Saskatchew