

to those prevailing in Great Britain where the subscribers to the local exchanges of the Government, Municipal, or National Telephone Company's systems enjoy equal privileges in regard to the use of the long distance lines, and can converse with any telephone user in the kingdom on payment of the proper terminal fee in addition to the long distance charge. This matter surely does not present such a difficult problem to our legislators, as to require even a Select Committee to waste time over. The drafting of an amendment to the present law, providing for the interchange of telephone connections and fixing a terminal fee of five per cent. of the company's long distance charge, with a minimum of five cents, payable to the municipality or company receiving the distant call is a simple matter, and moreover is an arrangement which would be perfectly fair to all parties.

In order to furnish some idea of the practical working of this system in Great Britain we give the following list of the Government long distance charges for a three minute conversation, also the terminal fees payable to the local telephone exchange in each town:—

#### Long Distance Telephone Charges, and Terminal Fees in Great Britain and Ireland.

	Distance miles.	Long distance charge. \$	Terminal fee cents.	Total \$
Up to .....	25	0.06	6	0.12
" " .....	50	0.12	6	0.18
" " .....	70	0.18	6	0.24
" " .....	100	0.24	6	0.30
London to Birmingham.	105	0.36	6	0.42
Nottingham .....	110	0.36	6	0.42
Manchester .....	165	0.48	8	0.56
Swansea .....	170	0.48	8	0.56
Liverpool .....	180	0.48	8	0.56
Plymouth .....	200	0.60	8	0.68
Newcastle-on-Tyne ...	260	0.72	8	0.80
Edinburgh .....	340	0.96	12	1.08
Glasgow .....	365	1.10	12	1.22
Dundee .....	377	1.10	12	1.22
Belfast .....	404	1.34	12	1.46
Aberdeen .....	435	1.22	12	1.34
Inverness .....	453	1.34	12	1.46
Dublin .....	491	1.58	12	1.70
Cork .....	619	1.94	12	2.06

The iniquitous compact existing between the Bell Telephone Company and certain railway companies for the purpose of depriving municipal and independent telephone users of the right to communicate with the freight and passenger departments of the railway systems of Canada, is also an evil which should have been remedied long ago. Instead of this we find the president of a "Bell" subsidiary company using his position as chairman of the Railway Commission to veto the finding of his colleagues on this question by raising a legal difficulty as to the payment of compensation to the offending companies, while the Government looks on and denies legislation which would finally settle the matter. The action of the Government on this question is reprehensible. In the first place the agreement between these corporations was made for the sole object of restraining trade in telephones, and in the second the railway companies by adopting it are discriminating in favor of one section of the public to the disadvantage and

personal loss of another section. Both these acts are, we believe, contrary to the laws of the Dominion, and for that reason alone, these corporations would not be entitled to compensation even if they had any other ground to base such a claim upon, which we are satisfied they have not. As well might the Canadian Pacific claim compensation from the Grand Trunk Pacific for building a second transcontinental line, as that the "Bell" should be entitled to compensation because its competitor is permitted to place a telephone for the convenience of its own subscribers in an office where the monopoly is already enjoying that privilege.

It is a regrettable fact that in all matters relating to telephone legislation up to the present time, the Government has shown an apparent disposition to uphold the "Bell" monopoly, and to disregard the wishes of the people, voiced through the municipalities. Deputation after deputation has waited upon the Government only to meet with honeyed words and half-hearted promises, which have ended in nothing.

We are glad, however, that the Government has at last decided to act and we trust the efforts of Sir William Mulock and his colleagues will result in securing to the people an efficient and popular telephone service, of which they have so long been deprived by the monopolistic rule of the Bell Telephone Company. In conclusion, we must congratulate the Government on its representation upon the Select Committee by the Postmaster General. This augurs well for the outcome of the investigation, as no minister is so qualified to direct the work of the committee, nor as far as we know, could anyone have been selected with so wide a knowledge of the subject or a better appreciation of the important bearing it has upon the city and rural life of hundreds of thousands of Canadians.

Whatever may be the final outcome of the Government's investigation, we are persuaded that the only satisfactory solution of the telephone problem will be found in the State ownership of the long distance lines, and the local control (municipal or otherwise), of the local exchanges. We are not prepared to endorse the proposal to nationalize the telephone service, as a whole, for the reason that we do not think any system of centralized management could be devised which would satisfy the different local conditions existing in each of the numerous municipalities in all parts of the Dominion. In the matter of local telephone service the people desire to cater for themselves just as they do to-day in regard to electric lighting, street railways, gas and water. If this right were taken away, while the service as a whole might be improved and rates lowered, many of the present grievances would be merely transferred from the "Bell" monopoly to the Government, as it would be manifestly impossible to accede to all the demands which would be made upon the State, and at the same time carry on the business with that rigid uniformity so essential in the administration of a government department. Further than this, the creation of a State monopoly of the telephone business and the consequent adoption of a fixed standard type of equipment would take away all incentive for the development of inventive genius, and retard the introduction of improvements, whereas if the municipalities established or controlled the local systems there would always exist a friendly rivalry to secure the best service, and competition in the invention and manufacture of telephone equipment would be encouraged. These are points which should be carefully considered before