

make a great mistake. This amendment is simply a step in the right direction, but there is no reason why we should not go further. In the province of Ontario we have over sixty independent telephone companies to-day. They are increasing at a rapid rate. They serve largely, people whom the Bell Telephone Company would not serve—the farmers of the country. These lines are run into the towns and villages, but they are handicapped because they cannot have connection with the longer lines. It would be an advantage to every telephone company to have connection with the subscribers of another company in the same locality.

An hon. MEMBER. Let them subscribe to the Bell.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Are you going to tell them that they must subscribe to a certain company? What right have you to dictate to me what telephone company I shall deal with? What right has this parliament to say that men who choose to do so shall not have as good a right to form a telephone company as the Bell people have?

Mr. GALLIHER. Then, let them stand on their own feet.

Mr. CAMPBELL. So they do. But this parliament is bound to consider the convenience of the public. The Bell Telephone Company seems to be a great bugaboo. Hon. gentlemen talk about it as though it were a sacred thing, something not to be lightly spoken of,—this giant concern that has been bleeding the people white for years and that is now trying to crush and demolish other companies because it wants to get the business of those other companies into its own hands: I say that we are making a mistake in not forcing this connection, and I am sure that if the government would follow the course I suggest they would deserve the thanks of the people of Ontario and of the whole Dominion.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. To emphasize what the hon. member from Centre York (Mr. Campbell) has so well said, let me give an instance from his own county. There are many farmers' lines in the county of York including North York, the constituency of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Aylesworth). These farmers' lines run into the towns, such as Aurora, Newmarket and Markham, and there reach the doctor, the veterinary, the stores and so on. They seek connection with the lines of the Bell Company, why should not they have that service when they are willing to pay the Bell Telephone Company's tolls? A little while ago, an hon. gentleman challenged me to give evidence on a point I made. I do not intend to quote the evidence in detail, but briefly and generally. In the report of the select committee on telephone system, Mr. Oughtred testified:

Q. But it would be a great advantage if the Bell company interchanged service with you?—

Mr. CAMPBELL.

A. If our company could get a long-distance service by connecting with the Bell or any other company it would be a good thing.

Mr. GALLIHER. Yes, for the company.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. For, everybody.

Q. That is the great consideration in the telephone situation to-day in Canada, a general law compelling the interchange of business on reasonable tolls?—A. That is the greatest that I know of.

Scores of men from all over Canada testified to the same effect. Many came here from the province of Quebec and testified in French, their testimony being translated by the hon. member for Beauharnois (Mr. Bergeron), and the universal testimony of these gentlemen from the province of Quebec was that these farmers' lines wanted to get access to the Bell service and were willing to pay the same terms as anybody else to get it. There is no member of this House, but could give instances of local farmers' lines which wish to have connection with the Bell lines and are willing to pay to get it. The hon. member for Stormont (Mr. Pringle) spoke of the investment of the Bell Telephone Company as very large. Its greatest investment is in the province of Ontario, and if that investment is so great as is said, and if the company refuses to do justice to the farmers of the province of Ontario, I can tell the hon. gentleman and the Bell Telephone Company that the farmers will go to the Ontario legislature for relief and they will get it there. If they don't get it one way they will get it another. If this company has such an enormous investment as they say it has, the farmers of Ontario will see that they pay a proper taxation on that investment. They will discriminate in the imposition of that taxation by saying that the company that treats them fairly and gives an interchange of business, shall be taxed a certain percentage, and the company that refuses it shall be taxed another.

Mr. GALLIHER. I would like to point out to the two members for York who have just spoken that the county of York is not the whole Dominion of Canada. While I am willing to concede that the farmers and others living in the county of York should have the best possible telephone service at a reasonable rate, I also think that we live in a province, or at all events in a portion of a province, which may not be as well situated in that respect as the county of York and are still entitled to have our telephone service. Now, if the contention of these hon. gentlemen is correct, that the government should not only give long distance connection, as they proposed to do in this amendment, but also give local connection, what will be the position of our telephone system in the interior of British Columbia? It would simply mean this, that if a rival company should come in and do a little