

of independent telephone companies in the U.S. in recent years of which we have given statistics continues and the Bell is no longer the dread of cities and communities who formerly felt helpless in the grasp of that great corporation. The light is fairly dawning in Canada now, too, and news items in this issue show that our cities and towns are at last beginning to realize that their souls are their own. This dawning light comes not so much because the cities and towns have not felt that they were charged excessive rates for a very indifferent service with antiquated instruments, as because local men with money are now waking up to the fact that independent companies properly organized and with the sentiment of the people at their back have a really good investment by which the profits of the telephone business may be retained in their own town and reward their own enterprise instead of swelling the too-well-filled pockets of a few rich men in other cities.

But after all the question of starting independent companies should be determined, not by a feeling of resentment against the Bell monopoly, however much this feeling might be justified, but by a cool calculation on the part of local investors as to whether they can give a better service to the people, at a more reasonable price, and at the same time secure a good return for the money invested. The remarkable thing in the history of the independent telephone movement in the States is that in spite of the poor management of many of these local companies starting as they have without previous experience and putting in unwisely chosen managers, there have been scarcely any cases of absolute failure, while those few cases of unprofitable investment have been due to causes which would have shown worse results in almost any other business.

It is gratifying to learn that Port Arthur and Fort William, whose well equipped independent systems were described in a recent issue, have shown themselves proof against the blandishments of the Bell Company, which would be delighted to take over and pay for the municipal systems now working there. As will be seen in our news columns Toronto Junction is moving to have a municipal system of telephone, and Hamilton is considering a second offer from the United States. Welland, Ont., and Newtonville, Ont., are establishing independent exchanges, while in Montreal some New York gentlemen have just purchased the franchise of the Merchants' Telephone Co., a local competitor which the Bell Company thought it could safely neglect.

Let the good work of independent telephones go on and later on the question of long distance connections can be dealt with by legislation in the interest of independent companies when they become a stronger aggregation. The problem of long distance connections is not so serious a drawback, as we have already shown. In the course of ordinary business the majority of out-of-town calls are within a radius of fifty miles, and groups of independent companies working together can supply these calls in the majority of cases; and where longer distances are to be reached the Bell is still available to those who wish to pay the rate. The opinion of Mayor Urquhart, of Toronto, who is a lawyer and has studied this matter, is that the solution of the long distance problem is to be found in legislation compelling the Bell Company to furnish at a reasonable rate, connections with local companies whose subscribers require such service.

—The magistrates before whom the charge of conspiracy in the Bell Telephone case came at Whitevale failed to agree, one being for conviction the other for acquittal. The matter has however come before a higher court, an indictment having been laid against the company at the sessions for the County of York. The Grand Jury found a true bill, but the parties were not ready to go on and the trial was laid over till May. The penalty, if found guilty, is in the case of companies, a heavy fine.

—A deputation of about fifty, representing the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, waited on the Government at Ottawa on March 19th, to urge a re-adjustment of the tariff. The deputation stated that the Association was preparing schedules suggesting what changes should be made, which they would submit to the Government in confidence, but the Minister of Finance thought they should be made public. Of course no intimation was given as to what the Government intends to do, and the budget speech will be awaited this year with more than usual anxiety.

—Recent statistics of the iron ore trade of the United States show that the market for Lake Superior ores is developing in a marked manner in comparison with ores from other districts. This means that in years of depression when the demand slacks off, many of these other mining regions will drop out of the producing list, while Lake Superior will remain in evidence. In view of the mining areas that await development in the Superior district north of the United States boundary, this fact will have a significance to Canadian trade.

—It is announced that under a charter, amended and re-enacted at the last session of the Dominion parliament, work is to begin in the spring, on a canal connecting the Richelieu river at St. John's with the St. Lawrence opposite Montreal, a distance of  $18\frac{1}{4}$  miles. It is to be pushed vigorously and completed within two years. The canal must have a width of not less than 80 feet at the bottom and a depth of not less than 9 feet, but we are informed it is to be made 14 feet deep so as to correspond with the St. Lawrence Canals, with provision for an increase to 21 feet. This is an old scheme revived. It is a short cut and will save 83 miles of a detour by way of Sorel, but it may have the effect of diverting some Canadian trade to New York, the St. Lawrence route not being an attractive one in the eyes of marine underwriters.

—Although on the market less than four years the steam turbine of the Parson's type appears to have made its way rapidly as a generator of electrical power by alternating current. The employment of turbo-generator units of low frequency and high voltage appears to give high efficiency as well as to save floor space. The Westinghouse Machine Co., which makes this type of steam turbine, reports that it has in successful operation 4,000 kilowatts of this class of generator and has 75,000 k.w. contracted for. Among railway plants that are being thus operated are the Metropolitan Ry. Co. and the Metropolitan District Ry. of London, Eng., aggregating 30,500 k.w. for operating the London "Tube" and surface railway systems. The former plant will employ three 3,500 k.w. units and the latter eight 5,000 k.w. units, the largest turbine machinery yet contracted for. Two United States railway installations are those of the Cleveland, Elyria & Western Ry. Co. and the Consolidated Railways and Lighting Co., of Wilmington, N.C., each of which will