

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Subsection 2 raises rather an interesting question, one to which I have not given very much consideration, but I would like to know whether it has been under the consideration of the government. That is: Whether or not it is desirable to retain under control of the Governor in Council the revision of telephone rates, or whether it would not be better to give that control to some independent body. We have the Railway Commission constituted at great cost to control rates on railways, and no reason occurs to me at present why the same body should not control telephone rates. Has this matter been considered by the government, and if so with what result?

Mr. HYMAN. The clause in this Bill is the usual clause. If hereafter it is the policy of the government to transfer to the Railway Commission the power to control these rates, of course this company would be brought under that provision of the General Act. This Bill ought to be considered apart altogether from any policy of the government in the matter.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. When the Bill for the establishment of the Railway Commission was before the House, very cogent reasons were given by the then Minister of Railways why a commission composed of men specially qualified who would give their whole time to the matter, could deal more effectually and thoroughly with questions of this kind than could members of the administration. Parliament coincided with these reasons which are equally cogent in regard to telephone matters. This is a subject which ought to engage the immediate attention of the government.

Sir WILLIAM MULOCK. Did we give the Railway Commission power over telegraph rates?

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I do not think the power was conferred on the Railway Commission, but I do not see any particular reason why it should not be. We all know that members of an administration have a great deal of their time occupied with their political duties, and they cannot be expected to so thoroughly deal with matters of this kind as would an independent tribunal. We know also that immediately upon the institution of the Railway Commission matters which would never have come before the railway committee of the Privy Council were brought to the attention of the Railway Commission and have been dealt with. It has been suggested by the member for Winnipeg (Mr. Bole) that a telephone in order to be effective must essentially be a monopoly. I am not saying whether the statement is correct or not, but assuming that it is correct, it necessarily follows that you must either have the telephone as a government institution, or you must have it as a monopoly in the hands of a private corporation or pri-

Mr. R. L. BORDEN.

vate corporations under the most effective control that can possibly be devised, so far as rates and operations are concerned. It is important that the government should take this into consideration at the earliest possible date.

Mr. HYMAN. I do not think there can be any two opinions on the main question which the hon. member has brought up. Of course that would have to be brought about by a general amendment to the Railway Act, and not in connection with this private Bill.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I am not suggesting that we should make any change here, but I avail of this as a convenient time to press on the government the advisability, if not the absolute necessity, of having the control of these rates placed in the hands of an independent commission.

Mr. FOSTER. The intention of subsection 2 was that the municipalities should have the right to apply for a revision of rates, but I do not think that is quite clear by the language of the section. If it is not clear it should be made clear.

Mr. HYMAN. That was the intention of the clause—can you suggest a better wording?

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I would suggest that it should read:

'May from time to time apply for such revision and be heard upon the application therefor.'

Mr. HYMAN. Very well, we will make that amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. HAGGART. There is nothing in this Bill to empower the government to expropriate this property at any time. Of course the government could exercise the right of eminent domain, but notwithstanding that there is the same power in England they insert in these Acts a clause giving notice to the stockholders that the government may at some future time expropriate the property and fix the terms of expropriation. There should be some similar provision to these acts just as we have in the Grand Trunk Act.

On section 17,—borrowing powers.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Is it usual to grant these powers in this absolutely unlimited form?

Mr. HYMAN. If I am not mistaken, these are the exact words of an Act passed last session of exactly the same character.

Mr. HAGGART. The hon. gentleman forgets that a Railway Act has been passed in the meantime, and that sections 192,