

4-5 EDWARD VII., A. 1905

and a complete service which cannot be done as long as the trunk lines are controlled by large companies, who prohibit smaller companies connecting with their trunk lines.

Therefore we, the committee of the county council of Prince Edward would recommend that the government of Canada take over or control the trunk lines and give all telephone companies connection with said trunk lines with a fair tariff per mile. All of which is respectfully submitted.

D. H. YOUNG, *Warden.*
D. T. STAFFORD,
B. F. WILSON,
W. S. BENSON.

No. 238.

SUMMERSIDE, P.E.I., July 3, 1905.

Sir WILLIAM MULOCK,
Ottawa.

SIR,—The telephone system in Summerside is operated by the Telephone Company of Prince Edward Island who control the telephone business throughout Prince Edward Island.

This company's trunk lines cover all parts of the island thoroughly. Their long distance charges are 25 cents for five minutes' conversation, or a twenty-word message to any point on Prince Edward Island. For distances under 10 miles the tariff is 15 cents. Subscribers are allowed an additional 20 per cent discount from the above rates.

There are at present about 50 subscribers to the Summerside exchange. The rates charged by the company for local service in Summerside are as follows: Business telephones \$20 per annum; residence telephones, \$15 per annum.

They render a very fair service, and are rapidly improving their plant. They have almost completed the installation of new bronze wire circuits for all subscribers, so that when this is finished we may expect a thoroughly good service. I don't think that any change in ownership, or competition would benefit us in any way, as we could hardly expect to get the present scale of charges reduced. I am of the opinion that perhaps it would be wise to lay down some general method or system of arranging the pole lines of electric, telegraph and telephone companies, to apply to future extensions or reconstruction, with the view of keeping them as far apart, and with as few intersections as possible, as there seems to be an ever present danger from accidental crosses between those lines. Rural service is not rendered to any extent to individuals throughout this country, as there seems to be little demand for such among the farmers. The telephone company, however, maintains a large number of toll offices all over the country, and I believe that a great number of these even are operated at a loss.

It is difficult to see how any legislation would benefit us, and the telephone being a natural monopoly, competition would simply mean largely duplicating the present system, and putting us to the expense of two telephones instead of one, without corresponding benefit.

As the telegraph system touches only a few points here, comparatively speaking, while the telephone operates in all the outlying sections, it would almost seem that the latter should receive government assistance for the maintenance of their non-paying points, and for the further extension of the system among small communities. I believe the telephone company receive a small subsidy for a limited time from the provincial government for the maintenance of some of their smaller offices. We at