

Private Bills

remark in reply to a part of the hon. member's speech which was out of order.

Mr. Rhéaume: The minister is aware he can always rise on a question of privilege if he wishes to do so. But he should not interject from his seat because it may be difficult for the *Hansard* reporters to identify the source of the interruption.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Dupuis: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. A moment ago the hon. member quoted me as saying that, to me, a distinctive flag is any emblem which does not bear a union jack. I want him to know that this is not true.

When referring to my remark, he forgot to add what I said at the end: any emblem bearing neither the union jack nor the fleur-de-lis.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There is no question of privilege. The hon. minister merely wishes to correct what he considers to be a mistake in the hon. member's reference.

[*Text*]

It being five o'clock the house will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely private bills, notices of motions for papers, public bills.

PRIVATE BILLS

BELL TELEPHONE COMPANY OF CANADA

The house resumed from Thursday, October 22, consideration in committee of Bill No. S-27 respecting the Bell Telephone Company of Canada—Mr. Brown—Mr. Lamoureux in the chair.

On clause 1—*Number of directors.*

The Chairman: When the committee rose on October 22 last, clause 1 of the bill with an amendment proposed thereto by the hon. member for Timiskaming and an amendment to the amendment by the hon. member for Lapointe was being considered. The question is on the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Cowan: You may remember, Mr. Chairman, that when this bill was up for consideration six weeks ago today I was making some remarks with regard to the sub-amendment. I am quite prepared to support the sub-amendment because I believe the general telephone users of Canada are entitled to more representation on this board than is now accorded to them.

[*Mr. Deputy Speaker.*]

When I spoke six weeks ago I referred to the letter which the presidents of the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Canadian National Railways had written in 1961 to the hon. member for Three Rivers. In this letter they pointed out they had lost a 30 year contract with the C.B.C. which went to the Bell Telephone Company of Canada, which company, the Bell, had undercut them on the tender by 25 per cent. When I read the letter to the house on December 21, 1963, on our discussion of the C.B.C. estimates, I read these two paragraphs from the joint letter which was signed by Mr. Donald Gordon and Mr. Emerson:

Assuming that it is in the national interest to maintain competition in the communications industry, we think you will agree that such competition cannot be preserved if one group is permitted to quote depressed rates in the competitive situation and to obtain recompense through higher rates for other services.

Public long distance telephone rates in Canada are 50 per cent or more above comparable rates in the United States which are regulated by the federal communications commission.

They went on to point out that the Bell Telephone Company, having undercut competitors by 25 per cent in a competitive field, would make good the losses on that contract by raising rates elsewhere in other fields of endeavour.

And better prophets, Mr. Chairman, never spoke, because we now have a report that the Bell Telephone Company is seeking an increase in rates in ten exchanges in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec at this very moment. There is a very interesting angle to this application for increases. I was interrupted by the clock six weeks ago today as I was about to read a Canadian Press dispatch which I saw in the Quebec *Chronicle-Telegraph* for May 2, 1964. I think the committee will be interested in a little history on this matter. This small dispatch says:

Bell wants to increase rates; Montreal. (CP)

The Bell Telephone Company said Friday, May 1, it has asked the board of transport commissioners for permission to boost rates in ten telephone exchanges in Quebec and Ontario.

A company spokesman said the exchanges in question have all outgrown their present rate group, and should be reclassified.

The increases would range from ten cents a month for a two-party line in St. Remi, Quebec, to \$1.35 on a one-party business line in Kitchener, Ontario. The two Quebec exchanges involved are Grand Remous and St. Remi.

The company announcement said telephone rates for an exchange are governed by the number of phones in its local dialing area.

Immediately after this debate concluded six weeks ago I wrote a letter to the board