

of these small companies was forced upon the trunk lines their business would be injured.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I do not think that that was the argument. The argument was one that was in accordance with facts within my own personal knowledge: A company having trunk lines may operate these trunk lines at a loss, but operate the whole system at a profit. If the subscriber to another company is to be allowed to use the trunk lines is he to be allowed to use them at the losing rate of the other company to its own subscribers, or are you to charge him twice as much as the others?

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. If the board think it right—yes.

Mr. CONMEE. I agree that that was the statement made, but how can the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) sustain that argument?

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I am not sustaining any argument, but pointing out what the argument was and stating that I know such things have occurred.

Mr. CONMEE. Well, we will admit that—that a company may maintain a long distance line in connection with its system and run it at a loss. But how is that long distance line going to be injured by having other subscribers—having other people to use it and pay tolls for the use of it?

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I did not say that it would be injured.

Mr. CONMEE. But that is the argument.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I did not use that argument and would not agree with it. But it is possible that you may give the long distance line additional business and still not make it remunerative. If the company owning the trunk line must admit the subscribers of other companies to use it, what about the charges? We are told that the board will fix the charges. Yes, but upon what basis—upon the losing basis granted to their own subscribers or upon a basis that will make the line pay?

Mr. CONMEE. I still contend that the argument is not a sound one, if put forward in the form in which I understood it. Others may have understood it differently and possibly I may be wrong. Now, it seems to me that this amendment has come before us at a very late stage in the consideration of this Bill. The effect of it may be quite clear to some hon. gentlemen, but it is not entirely clear to me that the power which it is said that the board would have in determining these cases is embodied in this resolution. In view of the lateness of the hour I would suggest that the committee should now rise and report progress, so that we may have an opportunity to consider this matter.

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. Some hon. MEMBERS. Question.

Mr. CONMEE. I do not know that hon. gentlemen are going to hurry matters by calling 'question.' I think the committee ought to have some reasonable time to consider this Bill.

Mr. MACPHERSON. The hon. gentleman cannot assume that he is the only member of the committee.

Mr. CONMEE. No, nor can the hon. member himself. He cannot encroach on my rights and I cannot encroach on his. I make that suggestion to the minister; if he does not choose to accept it he can refuse it.

Mr. TAYLOR. The minister who has charge of this Bill has locked up his papers and gone home, and I think it is time the rest of us did so too. I move that this committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again.

Mr. FIELDING. The minister is in attendance.

Mr. TAYLOR. No, he is not here.

Mr. FIELDING. He is nearby.

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. In 1881 or 1882 this government saw fit to give the Bell Telephone Company the most extraordinary charter that was ever granted by any parliament in the world for such a purpose. They gave the Bell Telephone Company a monopoly over this whole country, allowing them to place their poles wherever they chose. But to-day that privilege in their charter is to be wiped out, in so far as the money that they are asking this parliament to grant them is to be used in the future. I say that when you put in this Bill the clause that the Minister of Railways has moved, you are going further again than any parliament in the world; you are, in my estimation, going away beyond all that is reasonable and safe. Of course if the Bell Telephone Company are willing to accept this amendment, there is no harm done. But really you cannot find another measure of this kind passed by any other country in the world, compelling one company to give another company an interchange of traffic. There are something like two hundred single telephones in this country, not companies, but single telephones, that are controlled by the Bell Company in villages and towns. Now if this Bill goes through there is no reason in the world why independent companies cannot be formed in those localities and connect with the long distance phones. This Bill does not confiscate the property of the Bell Telephone Company. To-day the Bell Company have connections with forty independent companies, and I am sure that no hon. gentleman will say that the property of the Bell Company is confiscated by this measure.