

B.C. Telephone and Telegraph System

and I am sure from communications I have received from him that he will be co-operative to the fullest extent.

My hon. friend suggested a method of procedure, that of holding over the agreement for one or two months until we know what the position is. Well, in answer to that all I can say is that we have no funds in the estimates after April 1 to make that provision. Negotiations have taken a far longer period of time than I had anticipated and certainly longer than departmental officers had anticipated. But if there is any fear that any of our employees will be prejudiced, there are still the sittings of the committee on railways and shipping, which will begin on Monday. The officers of the Canadian National Telegraphs could be made available if necessary. It is the Canadian National Railways we are studying—their annual report, and general business activities—but I think I could make available officials of Canadian National Telegraphs if it were thought necessary.

I am hopeful that it will be possible to make this transfer on April 1 in a manner as equitable as possible under all the circumstances. There are bound to be some difficulties; there are bound to be complaints. We cannot cover them all. My hon. friend has brought up one case with which I must say I am not familiar, but I shall read in *Hansard* what he has said and see what the position is. If I am able to make a statement—and I hope I shall be able to before April 1—as to the rest of this transaction, I shall be glad to do so. But, so far as I can see, I do not think there is any reason why there should be undue anxiety over the matter.

Mr. Green: Will provision be made by the government to retain in the civil service those employees who cannot be taken over by the British Columbia Telephone Company or Canadian National Telegraphs?

Mr. Chevrier: I would not like to answer that until I can look at the position in greater detail. From the statement I have made to the house thus far it would appear that all the employees can be taken over by British Columbia Telephone Company. So that that point will not arise. I know also that in the case of Canadian National Telegraphs there are a number of men who have reached retirement age; some are over 65 years. It would not be the intention of Canadian National Telegraphs to take those men on. I do not think the house would expect that to be done. And there are one or two other cases where the position is a little more difficult. For that reason I think I

should withhold my answer until I know the number that Canadian National Telegraphs and British Columbia Telephone Company are able to take on.

Mr. Leboe: I should like to ask the Minister of Transport a question with regard to the extension of services in that part of British Columbia east of the Rockies, which might take up some of the slack, so far as personnel is concerned.

Mr. Chevrier: Does my hon. friend mean extension of facilities by ourselves or by British Columbia Telephone Company?

Mr. Leboe: By yourselves, east of the Rockies.

Mr. Chevrier: Is that included in this sale?

Mr. Leboe: No; how will the sale affect services there? I thought perhaps the minister might be planning extensive work there which might take up some of the slack, so far as members of the staff are concerned.

Mr. Chevrier: Well, in so far as the facilities being sold are concerned, we will have no further responsibility for any extension. In so far as facilities that are not being sold are concerned, well, that is a matter of policy which will have to come up when from time to time facilities are required. I cannot answer that now.

Mr. Barnett: In relation to the question just asked by the hon. member for Cariboo, I am under the impression that the minister misunderstood the import of the question. As I understood the question—and I would like to know the answer myself—in the case of one who is now employed in the British Columbia division and who wishes to remain in the government service, would provision be made for his transfer to a division of that service which is not involved in this sale so that he could continue his employment with the government telegraph and telephone organization?

Mr. Chevrier: I think the intention is to have all the employees taken over either by British Columbia Telephone Company or by Canadian National Telegraphs. If there are some who are not going to be taken over, then consideration might well be given to their employment in some other part of the service.

INCOME TAX COLLECTIONS FROM FARMERS IN
CALGARY AREA

Mr. D. S. Harkness (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I wish to raise a grievance concerning methods employed in collecting or attempting to collect income tax from certain farmers in the Calgary area and other places.