

a different answer at that time. Therefore my suggestion to him would be that he drop them or allow them to stand.

Mr. Knowles: May I say that I can see the force of what the minister says with respect to the first question. May I point out, however, that in the second question I asked for certain information concerning developments subsequent to May 12, 1953. Perhaps the two questions might be allowed to stand today and the minister and I can discuss them before they come up next time.

Mr. Speaker: Stand.

PEMBROKE-ALLUMETTE ISLAND BRIDGE

Mr. Fergie:

1. Has the federal government or any minister or department thereof received any communication, since November 3, 1953, from the premier or the government of the province of Quebec, with regard to the construction of the Pembroke-Allumette Island bridge?

2. If so, of what nature and on what date or dates?

Mr. Bourget:

1. Yes.

2. On December 5, 1953, the premier replied to a letter of November 18, 1953, from the Minister of Public Works. The object of the several communications is to find a basis suitable to the federal, Ontario, and Quebec governments for participating in the construction of the bridge in question.

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS, B.C.—
REPEATER STATIONS

Mr. Fulton:

1. Are the repeater stations on the northern British Columbia and Yukon lines of the government telegraph and telephone system included in the sale of the said system to the British Columbia Telephone Company and Canadian National Telegraph Company?

2. If so, to which company will they be sold?

3. By whom will they be operated?

4. How many such stations are there, where are they located, and when were they built, respectively?

5. What was the total cost of construction?

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS, B.C.—
EQUIPMENT AND COST

Mr. Fulton:

In connection with the government telegraph and telephone system in British Columbia and the Yukon:

1. How many telephones are there in use on the whole system?

2. How many exchanges, with how many switchboards respectively, and where is each located?

3. How many poles?

4. How many miles of wire?

5. How many miles of copper wire?

Questions

6. What is the net cost (installed) of the above totals of telephones, exchange switchboards, poles (with insulators and pole hardware) and wire respectively?

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS, B.C.—
SERVICE, RATES, ETC.

Mr. Fulton:

In connection with the projected sale of the government telegraph and telephone service system in British Columbia and the Yukon to the British Columbia Telephone Company and Canadian National Telegraph Company respectively:

1. What assurances have been given or are being required from the British Columbia Telephone Company regarding the continuation of telephone service on branch lines?

2. What, if anything, is being written into the agreement of sale concerning the principles by which the purchasers will be bound with respect to, or the conditions under which they will be entitled to demand, an increase in rates?

3. What arrangements have been made or are contemplated to ensure that the transfer is made with the minimum disadvantage to present employees of the government system relative to continuation in employment in their present positions or in positions of similar status with the new owners, and with respect to their superannuation rights?

Mr. Chevrier: With reference to these three questions a number of difficulties arise. In answering these questions I should like to bring those difficulties to the attention of my hon. friend and the house.

With reference to the date of construction of the repeater stations, we have only the approximate dates, and we will have to inquire from the Department of National Defence, under whose direction these buildings were constructed during world war II, the exact dates, which will, of course, vary, at each of the seven locations on the northern British Columbia lines.

With regard to the number of telephones, this changes from day to day, and will require information from Vancouver.

With regard to the number of poles, to be accurately answered to the last pole, it will require a physical check of no fewer than 3,000 miles of pole line, and that would take weeks to accomplish.

With reference to the net cost of the totals of telephone exchange switchboards, poles and wire, apparently this question refers only to the telephone side of things. It is practically impossible to divide telephone and telegraph costs with strict accuracy as in much of the outside plant, the telephone and telegraph wires are erected on the same poles. To give the telephone costs only would require us to go back year by year and extract telephone costs from construction and in some cases maintenance figures. This would require weeks to complete. We would much prefer