

*Corporations and Labour Unions*

or at any time having existed between such company and any other company or person; and

(1) generally, the extent, nature, value and particulars of the property, earnings and business of such company.

Further, the board has power to require the attendance before it of officers of the company to be examined in relation to any matter which in the opinion of the board is relevant to the returns I have enumerated.

Then, as the committee knows, every time one of these companies makes an application with respect to its rates there are extensive requirements as to the information which must be furnished. This is why there is now available, or can be made available under the acts which are mentioned in the schedule, as full information as it is desired to obtain under this bill. These companies already report to the board of transport commissioners and we did not think it would be sensible to include them under this bill. If we find, when the matter has been looked into further, that particular information we may need is not received as a matter of course by the board of transport commissioners, that omission can be taken care of under the authority already existing in the Railway Act.

I recognize that to an extent this becomes a matter of judgment. In our judgment, in view of the extensive powers that now exist with respect to the opportunity of obtaining information under the other acts, and the extensive burden already placed upon the companies named in the schedule to report to the federal authority, it would be unwise to insist that they duplicate that reporting burden.

**Mr. Caron:** The burden placed upon these companies will be the same as that placed on anybody else. The burden placed upon the smaller companies will be just as big as that placed on the larger companies, because the smaller companies have fewer employees to undertake this work.

**Mr. Fulton:** The difference is that the telephone companies, for example, already report to the board of transport commissioners while the others do not. If we required these companies to report here as well, they would have to report to two different places. That is where the duplication comes in.

**Mr. Caron:** But they do not necessarily give all the details which are included in this bill. We see in the report of the Bell Telephone Company for the year ending December 31, 1961 what a marked decline there has been in the number of telephone companies. We see that in 1954 there were 741 of these companies but that by 1961 the number had been reduced to 483. Some people are under the impression that a kind of combine is being created—that the small

[Mr. Fulton.]

companies are being forced to sell. It would be very interesting to have statistics to show exactly what is going on in Canada in this respect. That is why I think even the Bell Telephone Company should be obliged to report as the other companies are.

**Mr. Regier:** I certainly would like to support the contention of the hon. member for Hull. However, if an appeal is possible, I should like to appeal to the hon. member for Hull to investigate the make-up of the B.C. Telephone Company. He would realize that the Bell Telephone of Canada is a relatively innocent operation by comparison. The B.C. Telephone Company has often been forced to admit that it is part of an international cartel in the field of telephone communications.

The minister attempted to reply to me a few minutes ago, but he did not claim that the B.C. Telephone Company makes any report whatsoever to the board of transport commissioners. He read out the regulations and I noticed that the words "if required" appeared. I noticed that he spelled out carefully that there were powers existing in the legislation under which the B.C. Telephone Company could be made to report, but he went no farther than that. I will say right now that the board of transport commissioners is not adequately equipped to handle this responsibility, namely, the supervision of the activities of telephone companies in Canada.

The minister stated that the company can be asked to report on a number of matters—and he quoted the words "if required"—by the board of transport commissioners. I would suggest to the minister that our board of transport commissioners are not equipped even to place a requirement; and even if they were so equipped, they would not know what to do with the information if it were submitted to them. He says the board may from time to time inquire as to assets and liabilities and as to earnings and expenditures. He also mentioned a few other matters. I submit to the minister that our present board of transport commissioners is basically designed to govern and control our railroads and that it is ill equipped or most inadequately equipped to meet the aims and objectives of the bill now before us. I therefore believe the hon. member for Hull is asking in a reasonable manner that telephone companies not be exempt from the provisions of this bill.

The minister also said that very extensive requirements were imposed upon the telephone companies as to changes in rates. I have had enough experience in this regard to know what a phony this is. If anyone in British Columbia complains to the board of transport commissioners about proposed