

lion dollars, the American express companies to-day have in their coffers one hundred and fifty million dollars worth of securities that they have saved after paying enormous dividends to their shareholders.

Mr. LEMIEUX. What is the capitalization of the American companies?

Mr. MACLEAN (South York). Oh, it is very small actually. It has been enlarged several times in the way of water, but the companies are controlled by the railway companies over which they operate. I may tell the Postmaster General that if he does not hurry up and get his parcel post system going—and I know he is going to give his energy to it—we will see a splendid parcel post system in the United States before we have it in Canada. In the United States the Interstate Commerce Commission has turned its attention to express rates, and the express companies have been discovered to be guilty of the worst kind of petty larceny from their patrons. It has been found that they have collected double rates time after time. After the rate has been prepaid along comes the driver representing these express monopolies in the United States and he collects a second rate in many cases. The Americans see that to-day they are carrying the parcel post of foreign countries through their own country for one-third the price they have to pay on parcels shipped by the express monopolies and the people of the United States will not long stand that kind of thing. I do not disagree with the suggestion of the hon. member for East Lambton (Mr. Armstrong) that this should be made the subject of inquiry by commission, nor do I disagree with the late Postmaster General (Mr. Lemieux) that further conferences should take place, but I do say that nothing of that kind will be effective; the only way to get at these companies is for us to get into the business ourselves. The new principle of this twentieth century in connection with these great monopolies owned and controlled by private companies is that, if you cannot buy them out at a fair price you should go into competition with them. They got their franchises giving them the right to operate in the country and that imposed upon them the duty of dealing out fair treatment to the public and of giving the public a reasonable toll. These companies have failed in their obligation to the people and, having failed, the state is justified in going into competition with them. If we cannot have state ownership, let us have state competition. The cost of stringing telegraph wires across this country is comparatively small, the right of way is easily obtained; we have better poles than are to be found in

any other country in the world; we can make the copper wire here if necessary out of our own copper, and indeed telegraph construction in Canada is so cheap that the companies are ashamed to show what it actually costs in comparison with their capitalization. I declare for state competition, and I declare we should start it now. Start it and watch the coon come down and see how quick he will come down when you announce that you are going into the business. As long as they can put us off with promises of concessions, they will do nothing serious. Recently, the public did get a concession, and, strange to say, that concession came one week after the discussion I raised in this House. The coon came down to that extent. It did not happen accidentally; I do not claim the credit for it myself, but I claim that the discussion in this House is entitled to that credit. You will get nothing from those monopolies if you merely say you will negotiate with them. Go into the telephone business and give our farmers cheap phones. I heard reference to-night to the case of Manitoba, and no doubt there have been increases there, and that should be so, but I do believe that the people of Manitoba and Saskatchewan and Alberta would not part with their public owned telegraph system on any account.

Mr. LALOR. What are the telephone charges in Manitoba?

Mr. MACLEAN (South York). I can not give the exact figures, but I know that reductions were made when the province took them over, and we would have reductions in Ontario if we had state-owned telephones.

Mr. MACDONALD. Has not the price been raised in Manitoba?

Mr. MACLEAN (South York). Suppose it has?

Mr. MACDONALD. That is not an answer.

Mr. MACLEAN (South York). There has been some change in the rate, and the Manitoba government was taunted for not having quite realized what it promised to do.

Mr. OLIVER. That is a very mild statement of it.

Mr. MACLEAN (South York). Well, I will go so far as to admit, if you like, that public ownership in Manitoba has failed, but I will point the hon. gentleman fifty other instances where it has been a great success in other countries.

Mr. NESBITT. Name one.