

messages, as in the law governing telegraph companies; and another provision giving the Minister of Justice the first right of use of the telephone system. Another very important clause, and one in the line of something to which I have directed the attention of this House more than once, empowers the government to take over the telephone system at any time in the same way as they are authorized to take over the telegraph system of the country. Still another very important point well worthy of the attention of the House, well worthy of adoption, is a clause which will have the effect of preventing any telephone company hereafter from discriminating unfairly against a rival line. For instance, the municipalities of this country are going in for a municipal system. But when the Bell Telephone Company or any other that at the present controls the business—as has been the case in the United States—hears that a new telephone system is being started they starve it out by competitive rates. In some places where a rival telephone system has been started and has been giving subscribers telephone service at from \$25 to \$35 a year, the big monopoly has come in and said to the local users of the new system: We will give you telephone service at \$2 or \$3 a year for three years if you will sign an agreement with us. They will not be able to do that by this Bill. They will have to treat every city and every village under like circumstances in a like way. There is also a provision that if the government desires to take over the lines the price to be paid therefor shall be subject to arbitration if the two parties cannot agree. The final clause is a repeal of a very obnoxious general Act that was passed in this country some years ago. I referred to it last session. It was done in the interests of the Bell Telephone Company, as I now find. This little Act that was put through this parliament some ten or fifteen years ago, was to the effect that the words 'telephone' and 'telephonic' were not to be construed as 'telegraph' and 'telegraphic,' notwithstanding the Act that the English courts had years preceding held they were one and the same thing. It is because of that little Act that the telephone companies to-day do not come under the Telegraph Companies Act. I propose in this Bill to repeal that clause. I regard this Bill as a very important one. I have had it drafted by a rather eminent counsel, it has been thought over very carefully. It is on the line of the petitions that are being sent into this House every day. I hope that when it comes before the House we will have the co-operation of the House and especially the co-operation of the government in giving the public some kind of control, some kind of regulation, of what is becoming one of the great monopolies of this country, and a monopoly that up to the present time does

Mr. MACLEAN.

not treat the public fairly. The Bell Telephone Company have asked this parliament to increase their powers of capitalization and for other great privileges. But in asking for these privileges they have not been willing to make any concessions to the public. Now, I am not introducing this Bill with any antagonistic spirit to the Bell Telephone Company, but I am applying to the telephone companies the same general principles which this parliament has seen fit to apply to telegraph companies and to railway corporations.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

MEMBER INTRODUCED.

Geo. Riley, Esq., member for the electoral division of the city of Victoria, B.C., introduced by the Prime Minister (Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier) and the Minister of Agriculture (Hon. Mr. Fisher).

CATTLE GUARDS ON RAILWAYS.

Mr. E. A. LANCASTER (Lincoln and Niagara) moved for leave to introduce a Bill (No. 3) to amend the Railway Act. He said: This Bill which relates to cattle guards is the same Bill as was introduced here by me last session, and which I am sorry to say did not get further than the committee stage, having been referred to a special committee. The law at present does not require railway companies to keep up cattle guards at crossings except as against animals under the control of a human being, and the Bill seeks to protect cattle when passing along a highway where there are railway crossings. It has been said that there is an ancient but unwritten rule that no member shall be allowed to carry a Bill through parliament during his first session; perhaps that accounts for the disaster that befell this Bill last session. But that time has now passed, and I hope this Bill may be more lucky during the present session.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HIS EXCELLENCY'S SPEECH.

House resumed adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mr. Campbell for an Address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session.

Mr. HENRI BOURASSA (Labelle). Before dealing with the particular point to which I wish to direct the attention of the House to-day, I desire to refer for a moment to a few paragraphs of the address.

In the paragraph relating to the assassination of President McKinley, I suppose the government really voices the feelings