

the good points of the Canadian Associated Press service as I am.

We have now come to a point where we must be governed by your decision as to the lines on which we are to work in the future. If you favour the principle of co-operation between the government and the press of the country in the supply of old country news concerning Canada, the association is prepared to do its utmost to extend its membership and if possible add to the service which will make it even more acceptable and useful than it is at the present time to the people of the Dominion.

I think the foregoing covers all the points that I spoke of at the interview.

Yours truly,

J. ROSS ROBERTSON,
President.

This contains as full and comprehensive a statement of the work of the association, and the manner in which it is performed, as we could hope to have. I am aware there has been some criticism. I have been disposed to be lenient in my judgment of the service, because I know from my own experience that it is not always easy for a journalist to get information which seems to some persons to be important. It takes all sorts of people to make up the newspaper world, and many of the items which are cabled by the Associated Press will perhaps be regarded by some as of not great importance, and what one reader would regard as of particular importance is regarded of much less value by another reader. Making allowance for that, I think the service on the whole has been useful, and for the present at all events we are disposed to give them a helping hand to the extent of this appropriation for the two years.

Mr. FOSTER. I wish to ask the minister two questions. What newspapers constitute the association? I believe the number is twelve, but which are the newspapers? In the second place, as this has now been going on for five years, has the membership been decreasing or increasing? Another question is, What is meant by the expenditure of dollar for dollar, and what do the government take in as items of dollar for dollar, and how do they get at those items?

Mr. FIELDING. With regard to the first question as to the names of the papers, I think they are chiefly papers of Montreal and Toronto. I find the memorandum furnished me does not give me the names, but probably it is only those papers in large communities which can afford to become partners in the enterprise, and the less important papers have to take the news from them. I think I may say that it is the papers of Montreal and Toronto chiefly, although I believe at one time some other papers were included. As to the other question, it was understood, and we accepted the statements of the president of the association in the matter—I do not think we require anything but their own certificate—

that they must satisfy us that the cable service they are receiving costs them twice the amount, that is to say that we divide the dollar equally in helping them to pay the cost of the cable, on the principle of helping the man who helps himself. If they pay a dollar, and they must show us that they have done so, we give them another dollar for their news.

Mr. BERGERON. What is the object of helping the association?

Mr. FIELDING. We will discuss that in committee.

Mr. BERGERON. It is on the principle that I ask the question. I have great respect for Mr. Robertson, who is a very prominent newspaper man. It looks as if we were financially helping a few gentlemen to the detriment of a great many other newspapers. I understand there are some newspapers which do not belong to the association and they are prepared to get their despatches in a different way. We are voting money to the detriment of those gentlemen who do not belong to the association. I have heard a great many criticisms of the reports which have been sent to Canada since we have been paying this money. There are despatches that may interest some people but other things are looked for and a great many people are dissatisfied. I will mention an instance which comes to my mind and which occurred last July. It was about three days before we could procure any news about the Bisley team and the report with regard to the shooting for the Kolapore cup was sent in such a mixed up way that nobody could make anything out of it. It seems to me that the government should have nothing to do with this matter. I do not see why we should pay money out for this purpose. Another consideration is that this system may be unfair to the opposition in the House. These newspapers may be prompted to publish despatches in such a way as to favour the government. I do not understand why a government which is so much opposed to protection should go out of its way to spend money to help gentlemen who can perfectly well take care of themselves. The principle is bad.

Mr. A. A. McLEAN. I understand that there are twelve subscribers and that there is only one subscriber west of Ontario—that is in Winnipeg—and none east of Quebec. I think that if this \$12,000 is to be paid the government might make some effort to bring other newspapers into this association.

Mr. FIELDING. How?

Mr. A. A. McLEAN. They should devise some scheme. Twelve newspapers receive this bounty of \$12,000. Every one of these papers is rich, and I think that the government should see that the eastern and