

legislation along that line; that is the state of Maine, and in that state they have never found it practicable to put that legislation in force, and it is not in force to-day. I am probably speaking against the feelings of a large number of the members of this House, because there is a growing feeling against considering the interests of invested capital. I say it is a feeling that should not be encouraged. We want capital to be invested in this country, but we will not get capital if the parliaments of this country are going to pass legislation which will interfere with and destroy the interests built up by capital. Now, Sir, is it practicable? Why did we have these experts? I have taken the trouble to go through this evidence to see what these experts said in regard to the practicability of handing over a long distance line to other companies, and I cannot find one tittle of evidence in the mass of evidence that was given to show that such a thing is practicable. On the other hand, I find that the evidence of the gentleman who represented the independent companies was that it would kill the company. He was asked:

Q. If two competing companies were connected physically, I mean if they had an enforced physical connection, would it not be possible for one line to waste the lines of the other company to a considerable extent?—A. It would be possible for one company to kill the service or for each of them to kill the service of the other.

Now, what do we want in a telephone? We want almost instantaneous connection. For instance, a man in Montreal wants to speak to a man in Toronto on an important business matter. The long distance line is gone; some local service between Toronto and Montreal has taken control of it. Some hon. gentlemen say we have arrangements made by which freight is carried on. That is an entirely different proposition. The telegraph is an entirely different proposition. You hand in your telegraph message and the company sends it over the wire; but the moment you connect one of these local telephone companies with the long distance wire, the local company and the person at the other end have absolute control of that wire; it is out of the possession of the parties who own the trunk line. I am not saying that it might not be proper to have one trunk line, and a large number of independent lines working in harmony; but I say that when you ask the rivals of the Bell Telephone Company to be permitted to take possession of their long distance line, you will not get proper and efficient service, and you will destroy the property of that company. Take the case that happens often. Some local line strings its wires along the line of an electric light company. They ask for connection on the long distance line of the Bell Telephone Company. A storm comes up, and an electric light wire and a telephone wire come in contact, with

Mr. PRINGLE.

the result that there is damage to the extent of perhaps \$1,000. Who is going to be responsible for that? This is something that occurs, and occurs frequently. Something was said by an hon. member from British Columbia in regard to building the extensions of a long distance line through a mountainous country. This afternoon, in reading in regard to the long distance lines in the New England States, I noticed that in one year there was damage to these long distance lines, from sleet and storm, equal to what was done on the New England coast by storms.

So I say that a company owning a long distance line goes to an enormous expense. It uses its own capital, and there is no reason why it should be asked to hand over the line it has built to its rival. It may be said that the rivals are not strong enough to build a long distance line. Well, in that case the public are protected because we provide in this legislation that in every locality where the Bell Telephone Company has not a system of telephones, the local companies are permitted to connect with it. In such cases, the companies will no doubt work in harmony. They will not be rivals, and the Bell Telephone Company no doubt will be pleased to get business from the others. This question of long distance lines in Canada is in its infancy. In the United States you have long distance lines in all directions, and one company does not control them all. There are to-day something like 275,000 miles of long distance lines in that country. When this matter was before the committee, I moved that the following subsection be added to section 1:

Provided that no order for such connection shall in any case be made or leave granted when, in the opinion of the board, the telephone system, line or lines of a province, municipality or corporation, or any system directly or indirectly connected therewith, and those of a company serve the same territory in whole or in part.

My hon. friend from East Toronto (Mr. Kemp) moved an amendment as follows:

To strike out the words 'in whole or in part' and add the following: To such an extent or under such conditions that, in the opinion of the board, the connection or communication should not be ordered.

While I do not agree entirely with that amendment because it embodies a principle which I think is a wrong one—the principle of allowing one company to step in and use the property of another company—yet I say that that would be fairer than the proposition now moved by the Minister of Public Works. We have had a good many propositions in this matter. The Minister of Railways gave us an amendment last evening. He has acted rather peculiarly throughout these proceedings. When the original clause 25 was before the committee and the