

Corporations and Labour Unions

of ignorance, I admit; but the minister also was ignorant until he got the report—at the suggestion that the Bell Telephone Company is mainly owned in Canada by Canadian shareholders. I think the popular impression is that there is some sort of connection between the Bell Telephone Company and the American Telephone and Telegraph Company. We would like to know something about the nature of that connection, because they certainly are not independent of one another.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Chairman, this raises a point on which there has already been considerable discussion and perhaps I should restate the position so that it may be perfectly clear. The position that I have taken, as I have already informed the committee, is that the government is able to obtain, in respect of companies described under heads 1 to 6 and 13 to 15 of the schedule, information that will clearly reveal the extent of foreign ownership, if any, in these organizations and its effect. At this time I would like to assure the committee that the government intends to collate the returns to be received under this bill with the information relating to these classes of corporations in the schedule.

It is the intention, also, to make summarized information available to the public on the extent of foreign ownership both with respect to the 25,000 companies included in the bill and also the exempted categories in the schedule. On the basis of this statement of the position and of what the result will be I would hope that hon. members would not feel it necessary to take away any of the exemptions so far given with respect to telephone companies, especially in the light of the fact that they are already subject to a heavy burden of reporting to a federal authority. It is precisely because they already report to a federal authority which is able to obtain all the kinds of information that we want that, we have exempted them from the provisions of this bill in order to avoid imposing the burden of making a duplicate report. Companies which do not already report to a federal authority will have to report under this bill, so between the two we shall be in a position to obtain and analyse information from the whole field.

Mr. Regier: I wonder if the minister could tell us exactly what information the B.C. Telephone Company has to supply to the board of transport commissioners. According to my findings the board of transport commissioners, who are supposed to be responsible for supervising the activities of the B.C. Telephone Company is, in this particular regard, being a mere scapegoat, and it is the opinion of many in British Columbia that supervision of this telephone company by

the board means absolutely nothing—that the board is not even equipped to handle this particular assignment. I should like to know exactly what the B.C. Telephone Company does have to report to the board of transport commissioners.

Mr. Fulton: It is very extensive information. I do not want to read the whole of it into the proceedings here but I shall do my best to summarize, and I shall try to summarize fairly. Section 385 of the Railway Act says:

Every railway, telegraph, telephone and express company and every carrier by water, if required by the board so to do, shall prepare monthly returns of its revenues, working expenditure and traffic and all other information that may be required.

Mr. Regier: If required.

Mr. Fulton: Yes. Such returns must be in accordance with the forms required by the board.

Then section 388 says that every railway, telegraph, telephone and express company and every carrier by water shall, annually, or more often if the board so requires, make a true and particular return of all accidents and casualties.

That does not seem to be very relevant to what we are discussing now.

Section 391 provides that the board may from time to time, by notice served upon a railway, telegraph, telephone or express company require a written statement showing in such detail as the board requires:

- (a) the assets and liabilities of such company;
- (b) the amount of its stock issued and outstanding, and the date at which any such stock was so issued;
- (c) the amount and nature of the consideration received by such company for such issue—
- (d) the gross earnings or receipts or expenditure by such company during any periods specified by the board, and the purposes for which such expenditure was made;
- (e) the amount and nature of any bonus, gift, or subsidy, received by such company from any source whatsoever; and the source from which, and the time when, and the circumstances under which, the same was so received or given;
- (f) the bonds issued at any time by such company, and what portion of the same are outstanding and what portion, if any, have been redeemed;
- (g) the amount and nature of the consideration received by such company for the issue of such bonds;
- (h) the character and extent of any liabilities outstanding chargeable upon the property or undertaking of such company, or any part thereof, and the consideration received by such company for any such liabilities, and the circumstances under which the same were created;
- (i) the cost of construction of such company's railway or other works or any part thereof;
- (j) the amount and nature of the consideration paid or given by such company for any property acquired by it;
- (k) the particulars of any lease, contract or arrangement entered into, or at any time having been entered into, and the particulars of any financial or business relations relevant to any matter within the jurisdiction of the board existing,