

No. 228.

CITY OF VICTORIA, B.C., June 7, 1905.

The Honourable Sir WILLIAM MULOCK, K.C.M.G.

Postmaster General and Chairman Parliamentary Committee *re* Telephone Systems, Ottawa.

## RE TELEPHONE SYSTEM.

SIR,—In reply to your circular of the 29th ult., with reference to this matter, I have the honour, by direction, to state for the information of the Parliamentary Committee that the only system of telephones operating in Victoria, is that of the Victoria & Esquimalt Telephone Company, which is an organization subsidiary to, and forming part of, the British Columbia Telephone Company, Limited.

The number of telephones in use is 1,350, and the number of subscribers is a little less. The charges are \$4 per month for business, and \$3 per month for residential use, excepting where party lines are installed in residences, and then the charge is \$2 per month.

The system is well managed and gives general satisfaction as far as the operating part is concerned, though there are instances in which telephones fail to reproduce distinctly the words of the speaker, but these conditions are remedied promptly upon complaint.

The business section of the city is well supplied with long-distance telephones and through them has connection with Nanaimo, Vancouver, New Westminster, B.C., and Seattle and Tacoma, Wash., also with points on Vancouver Island between Nanaimo and Victoria and throughout the Saanich Peninsula.

Generally speaking the company has proved enterprising in supplying localities with telephonic communication wherever business warranted extensions.

There is little doubt that if the rates were reduced there would be a corresponding increase in the number of telephones used and in the extension of the benefit of this convenience to many who decline to incur the expense involved under the present rates.

The council has already expressed its approval of the principle of municipal ownership and control of this public utility, by endorsing a resolution passed by the municipal council of Fernie, B.C., in January last, which reads as follows:—

‘Whereas, the Municipal Clauses Act now contains powers authorizing municipal ownership of all public utilities except telephones, Therefore be it resolved:

‘That, in the opinion of this council, the Municipal Clauses Act should be amended so as to empower city municipalities to construct, maintain and operate telephone systems throughout such municipality, and that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to our member, Mr. W. R. Ross, the Fernie Board of Trade, each board affiliated with the Associated Board of Trade, each city, municipality and each member of the legislature, asking their support in securing the necessary legislation.’

I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant,

W. J. DOWLER,  
C. M. C.