

change the spirit of our legislation and prepare ourselves for a change and also the people interested in those companies.

Mr. BERGERON. There is another way of doing that, but not by allowing the small companies to use the trunk lines and thus deteriorate the service for the Bell and other companies. My hon. friend spoke about the way the mails are carried he can do the same thing in the case of telephone companies.

Mr. BOURASSA. The objection my hon. friend made is the one which the Bell Company made against connections in the cases I have cited, and experience has proved that their objections were entirely futile, as they discovered themselves when forced to make these connections, but not until then.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. I move in amendment that we drop the word long distance and the clause will then read as follows :

Whenever any province, municipality or corporation, having ceased to construct or operate a telephone system or line and to charge telephone toll, is desirous of using any telephone service or line under or controlled by any company.

I strike out the words 'long distance' in the two places.

Mr. MONK. My hon. friend from Labelle (Mr. Bourassa) loses sight completely of the principle of compensation. It may be that in the future—which I hope is still somewhat distant because we are not yet ripe for it—the telephone systems of this country will be nationalized—but I am rather inclined to doubt that the country is prepared for the immediate carrying out of such a proposition—

Mr. BOURASSA. I did not say immediately.

Mr. MONK. But, whenever that does come, you must respect the principle of compensation. I have not been able to understand upon what principle even the amendment of the Minister of Railways can be adopted. Analogy has been drawn with railway companies, but it is well known that railway companies stand on a special footing. We build these railways, we give them running rights, we give them a valuable franchise, we protect them against rivalry. But here is a company which has developed its own industry itself, which has expended its own money, which has not had the slightest assistance from the state—by what principle are you going to force it to allow any other company to make use of its long distance lines? Take places where there are two rival companies. Take the city of Montreal where the Bell Telephone Company has built up a large business with its own money and gives general satisfaction—and with the exception of the instance cited by the hon. member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa), the Bell

Company have been very accommodating in their dealings with the people in the province of Quebec—but take Montreal, you make it open for any small company to get access to the whole network of the Bell Telephone Company. By what right do you do that? It is absolute confiscation.

Mr. BOURASSA. The moment there is a transmission by the Bell Company, of the messages of another company, do not the Bell Company, get a share of the price?

Mr. MONK. No doubt, but as was established before the committee last year that mode of compensation is not one which really indemnifies the Bell Company. You are in fact putting that company under contribution to establish a rival company, and in so doing it hurts its own subscribers. The way to carry out the idea enunciated by the hon. member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa) would be to expropriate the company and give it compensation. Then alone will you be applying the principle of eminent domain under fair conditions, but here you are applying it under unfair conditions.

Mr. CONMEE. I do not yet see that any good reason has been given this committee for the substitution of this amendment for the Bill which the committee passed on a previous occasion. The committee passed a Bill in which it is provided that there shall be an interchange of telephone service, not only for long distance but for short distance as well. What has moved the hon. gentleman advocating this amendment at this particular time to change that condition? I have not heard any good reason. Take the argument of the hon. member for Beauharnois (Mr. Bergeron) that you are imposing some onerous condition on a trunk line, because you give some small company the right for its patrons to use that line. I want to say to my hon. friend that every one in this country, whether he is a subscriber of the Bell Telephone Company or not, has the right to use that trunk line. I hope I shall be permitted to discuss the question without being accused of being an enemy of the Bell Company. I do not think that any one who advocates this interchange does so out of any feeling against that company.

Mr. BERGERON. Did you hear any one calling that company a bugaboo?

Mr. CONMEE. The hon. gentleman who used that expression did not use it in an offensive sense towards the company, but used it against what he considered a monopoly and against the argument advanced in its behalf. I could, if I wanted to take up the time of the committee, show what was absolutely a wrong action on the part of this company. Take the town of Port Arthur, we tried to get the Bell Company to establish a system there in the early