

be changed—as in this case, where the Leader of the Opposition (Hon. Mr. Macdonald) raises the question of these liens—we always sent the bill to a standing committee, where the departmental solicitor could be asked questions and could write out any changes that he thought should be put into the bill, and we selected what we thought best. That is what we plan to do here. Honourable senators can ask any questions they wish in this chamber, but I want that legal position discussed by the lawyers in the standing committee, where we can ask questions and find out what we want to know. However, if the house decides the other way I will abide by the decision.

Some Hon. Senators: Question.

The Hon. the Speaker: The question, honourable senators, is on the motion of the Honourable Senator Haig, seconded by the Honourable Senator Aseltine, that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Banking and Commerce.

In amendment it is moved by the Honourable Senator Pouliot, seconded by the Honourable Senator Stambaugh, that the bill be not referred to the Standing Committee on Banking and Commerce but that it be referred to the Committee of the Whole presently.

Those who are in favour of the amendment will please say "Content".

Some Hon. Senators: Content.

The Hon. the Speaker: Those who are opposed to the amendment will please say "Non-content".

Some Hon. Senators: Non-content.

The Hon. the Speaker: I declare the amendment lost. The question is now on the motion to refer the bill to the Standing Committee on Banking and Commerce.

Some Hon. Senators: Carried.

Hon. Mr. Pouliot: On division.

The motion for reference to the Standing Committee on Banking and Commerce was agreed to, on division.

ALBERTA-NORTHWEST TERRITORIES BOUNDARY BILL

THIRD READING

Hon. John T. Haig moved the third reading of Bill J, respecting the boundary between the province of Alberta and the Northwest Territories.

The motion was agreed to, and the bill was read the third time, and passed.

PRIVATE BILL

BELL TELEPHONE COMPANY OF CANADA— THIRD READING

The Senate resumed from yesterday, the debate on the motion of Hon. Mr. Golding for the third reading of Bill C, respecting the Bell Telephone Company of Canada.

Hon. David A. Croll: Honourable senators, in rising to speak to this bill I should begin by saying that I have a soft spot in my heart for the Bell Telephone Company. It is said and I have often heard it repeated that people like to work for the Bell. That of course raises the company in my estimation because it indicates that it has good labour relations, that it is an enlightened and progressive company and that its leadership is good.

I appreciate that it is one of the great public service corporations of this country and its stock is the bluest of blue chips. It is a well regulated company and it has a long history of service. But in its field this company is a monopoly. Someone said to me today that it is a benevolent monopoly. My only answer to that is, "There ain't no such animal."

The bill before us today asks for authority to increase the company's capital stock, the increase to be used for two things: expansion and development at the present time and in the future, and payment of commission on stock sales. I suppose the purpose of the commission would be to make it easier to sell the stock. I really do not think the Bell Telephone Company needs that, but if it does I am not going to oppose it. I have no quarrel with the Bell Telephone Company; I am speaking to the principle of the bill.

I conceive the principle embodied in the bill to be increased capitalization—to put it more bluntly, the building of a billion dollar corporation—and in that context I intend to discuss it.

It is a matter of public knowledge, and certainly it is a matter of public record, that now pending before the Board of Transport Commissioners is an application by the Bell Telephone Company for an increase in rates. It is described, I think, as a 15 per cent overall increase. That application has stirred the people, who have expressed themselves in the way that people normally do, that is by getting in touch with their closest elected representative, the municipal councillor. Municipal councils throughout the two provinces concerned have decided on collective opposition to the proposed increase. This action will involve considerable expenditure on the part of the municipalities, which they cannot afford. They, in the same way as we, suffer from the common failing that though everybody tells them how to spend money, nobody tells them how to raise it.