

*Private Bills*

representative. Also, if the province had a representative to see what is happening within that firm and to defend the interests of the public, we might see that some changes are occurring in many areas, and it may become easier and less expensive to obtain a telephone.

As I already stated, in view of modern inventions, space, distance, roads are shortened, if I may say so, because telephone communications may be established for instance, between Quebec city and Ottawa, within a few moments. The telephone is, therefore, a public necessity for a multitude of persons.

In my opinion, we should avail ourselves of the opportunity afforded by the consideration of Bill No. S-27 to discuss the opportunity of delaying for six months the passage of this bill, in order to allow the Bell Telephone Company of Canada to reconsider its point of view and admit on its board five directors representing, in short, the general population in each of the provinces where the company operates.

I believe that the federal government should, in such quarters, have a spokesman possessing in this field the knowledge required to assert the rights of the subscribers, since it is very hard for a subscriber to assert his rights.

Today in the province of Quebec when a claim is made to the Bell Telephone Company of Canada, it is not even possible to enter an office to state one's point of view. You go in a room, and you find there a series of telephones you have to use to state your grievances, without being able to see the claims attendant at the other end of the line. You just have to speak in a small black hole, in the telephone mouthpiece, while the other voice comes to you from the other end of the line.

You no longer have democracy, it seems to me, when things reach that stage because a company, as such, ought to have representatives. When we want to make a complaint, we should be given the opportunity to do so personally to somebody in an office instead of being compelled to use the telephone to speak to some unknown and invisible person. I think they have become a little too independent. That company has become so big that its unsatisfactory way of doing things is achieving damaging results.

There is also the matter of the "princess" telephone, which was supposed to be some kind of a marvel. The user is charged \$12 or \$13 for it, in addition to \$1.25 a month for service. But if he has the service discontinued for six or seven months and then wants it

again, he literally loses the sum of \$15 and has to pay for the telephone once again.

I think it is time to tell this company to take the time to reconsider the facts. If company directors wish to increase their numbers they should agree in the future to the appointment of men who would represent plain ordinary people, the mass, who, when they have grudges against the company, could then get in touch with an individual representing either the provincial or municipal authorities. This representative could then speak his mind, insist on and protect the rights of the subscribers, because nowadays one is not free to subscribe to the telephone service and cancel it the day after. It has become a must in this century. We have to subscribe to telephone service even if we do not like it and are not too pleased with the service.

Nowadays the telephone is often used to play hoaxes. Those who complain are told that it is impossible to track down the culprit, that the system is automatic. Rather than have his telephone cut off, the subscriber must put up with those phone calls night and day. Moreover, the subscriber must continue to pay all the time and his complaints are to no avail.

I think that that passage of Bill No. S-27 should be delayed six months, because there are several more important pieces of legislation to study. We do not care whether the number of directors is increased to 20, but we would like to obtain justice for the subscribers, to have the service improved and representatives appointed to hear the complaints and deal with the matter when necessary. There is something else, Mr. Chairman, when we have to use telephones during an election we are charged an extra \$50 at the outset. This can become unreasonable when 10, 15 or 20 telephones are installed in various committees. The telephone is very useful at election time, just as at any other time, and extra charges should not be made during an election.

Why pay more at election time for identical service? It might be objected that, since the phone is used more often, this might explain the higher rates. I do not think a telephone is used constantly during the 60 days of an election campaign. It is there to receive calls rather than to make them. I am of the opinion that it is also to the discredit of the company that it should ask so much for its service simply because they know that during an election campaign, people have to use the telephone. It is not surprising, therefore, to see the company register a