

give the people of Ottawa domestic telephones for \$20 a year, though in other places they charge a great deal more. Why should they be allowed to discriminate in this way? If the law is unsatisfactory it is because the government have not kept their pledge and do not look with favour on the idea of nationalizing so important a public service. I would like the Minister of Railways or the Prime Minister to state whether or not the public may look for relief this session. For two years there have been people in different parts of the country desiring to establish a telephone service for themselves where the Bell Telephone Company do not supply it, and where they have no access to the railway stations. I would remind the government of what the members from the Northwest said last session, that a huge monopoly threatened them through the Bell Telephone Company, that they wished to have access to the stations, to learn about the movements of grain, when they could ship, and other matters, and that they could not have access unless the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and the Bell Telephone Company were dealt with. The people want an answer immediately. They want to build independent lines all over the country, and they are restrained by reason of this agreement. The hope was held out last session that as soon as the Railway Commission was formed, there would be an opportunity afforded to establish independent systems. Instead of that, a most discouraging decision has been rendered by the commission. A question of law has been raised, involving enormous damages. We do not want law in this country; we want service for the public. It is easy to hang up a question of this kind in the courts for fifty years; but let us give immediate relief. Let us say that the only compensation to be considered shall be compensation for the damage caused by entrance in and upon stations by the telephone wires. That is not a serious damage, either to the Bell Telephone Company or to the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. These claims of theirs for immense damages are merely pretensions; there is nothing behind them. They may appeal to lawyers and courts, but to business men they have no solidity or argument behind them. They are merely attempts to strengthen the monopoly of these two companies who have conspired together against the public interest. If the question before the Railway Commission, was a question of law, as the chief commissioner said, the two other commissioners should have maintained that it was a question involving the public interest. The chief commissioner is evidently concerned over his decision, because he has issued an explanation, which is published in the papers of this morning. If it is only a question of law, parliament is above law or the interpretation of law. Parliament is competent to grant relief, and

it is in that view that I introduce this Bill to-day.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

STEAMBOAT INSPECTION ACT AMENDMENT.

Mr. LEIGHTON McCARTHY moved for leave to introduce Bill (No. 7) to amend the Steamboat Inspection Act. He said: This is the Bill which I introduced last session. I trust hon. members distributed it throughout the community and obtained an expression of opinion upon it from their constituents. It simply increases the standard of engineers and also prevents American tug boats doing business in Canada with engineers who have not obtained certificates from the Canadian government. The same remark applies to dredges. The present Act allows an uncertificated engineer to work in a dredge; but under this Bill an engineer employed on a dredge must have a certificate from the Dominion government. It also seeks to do away with the permits which at present may be granted by the Department of Marine to men who act as engineers for a season, and creates a fourth class of engineers to whom certificates may be granted, in the event of the owners of steamers being unable to obtain engineers of the 1st, 2nd or 3rd class.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

QUESTIONS.

COST OF CENSUSES.

Mr. KEMP asked:

1. What did the census of 1881 and that of 1891 cost respectively?
2. What has the census of 1901 cost up to the present date?
3. What books, pamphlets, bulletins, &c., have been issued disseminating varied information in connection with the last census?
4. What further information, if any, is it intended to publish, pending the completion of the census, and when will the same be issued?
5. When is it expected that the census of 1901 will be completed and issued to members of the House?

Hon. SYDNEY FISHER (Minister of Agriculture):

1. \$456,904.19 for 1881; \$570,115.54 for 1891.
2. To March 17th, 1904, \$1,179,376.01.
3. Bulletin I.—Families, dwellings and population.
Bulletin II.—Rural and urban population of Manitoba and Ontario.
Bulletin III.—Rural and urban population of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Quebec.
Bulletin IV.—Rural and urban population of British Columbia, the Territories and all Canada.