

present. However, the New Brunswick Telephone Company Limited will work with any community to provide 911 or another three-digit number if the cost of conversion to 911 is not excessive.

There are presently no plans to establish 911 calling in the Quebec Telephone territory. The company policy of Bell Canada is to provide the 911 service code on request from governing municipal bodies, subject to the conditions to which I have already referred. Bell has held or is anticipating holding discussions with municipal authorities in many centres in Ontario and Quebec. Northern Telephone Limited has had discussions and has prepared quotations for three of the major cities in the system's territory. In the Manitoba Telephone System the number 999 is provided as an emergency reporting number for the cities of Winnipeg and Brandon which encompass 65 per cent of the main telephones in Manitoba.

Saskatchewan Telecommunications is capable of providing 911 now in Saskatoon and will be capable of providing it in Regina in 1975, but to date no municipal commitment has been made. Saskatchewan Telecommunications will be prepared to review this matter in all centres on request. Alberta Government Telephones presently provides 911 calling in the cities of Calgary and Red Deer, with Lethbridge planned for 1973. The AGT will work with all municipal jurisdictions in Alberta to assist in establishing 911 for all communities.

The Edmonton telephone company presently provides 911 service for the city of Edmonton. The British Columbia Telephone Company is prepared to work with the various municipalities in introducing 911 as a universal emergency number.

If the concept of a universal emergency telephone number is to be legislated with reference to the federally-regulated carriers, it would appear preferable, as has already been mentioned in this debate, to insert it in the Railway Act rather than in the National Transportation Act. The establishment of a universal emergency telephone number is not a matter of powers, duties and functions but, rather, involves the implementation of specific action by the commission.

There is little more that one can add at the moment to what has already been said on the question of jurisdiction. I think the matter has been well reviewed but I will leave it to another member of the House to wind up this debate.

Mr. John M. Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I think the idea of an emergency number 911 is excellent. I believe that after the debate last night the Conservative party is badly in need of an emergency number in order to get out of the situation it has created for itself.

Mr. Dinsdale: Ask the Canadian public about that, John.

Mr. Reid: When dealing with bills presented by private members to illustrate ideas, I always have a great deal of fear in my soul when it comes to debating a motion put forward by the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock (Mr. Mather). His ideas are always intriguing and a little off what we would normally term the beaten path. They are sometimes difficult to talk out as they are usually short

Emergency Telephone Number

and simple, and the ideas presented are usually clear. One has no alternative but to deal with the substance of what he has proposed.

Mr. Stanfield: Is that what you are doing?

Mr. Reid: It is a good thing there are not many members in the House of Commons like the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock. If there were, there would be too many decisions taken by this House of Commons, and that would certainly destroy the reputation we have of being a place not of action but of talk.

Mr. Stanfield: You are setting a pretty good example right now.

Mr. Reid: I want to make it perfectly clear to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) that it is not the government which is afraid to make decisions, it is the opposition which continually holds back excellent legislation for the purpose of debating it one more time and making one more speech. Perhaps what we really should do in this House of Commons to eliminate this difficulty is take a leaf out of the book of Westminster, the mother of Parliament in London, by attempting to work out an equitable system of allocation of time and decide how much time should be wasted on legislation—

● (1640)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I think the hon. member has the wrong number.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, as usual you are quite right. I am appreciative of your comments, particularly as I noted that you were awake at five o'clock this morning to handle affairs in this House while I was not here.

I should like to deal with the points raised by the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock. As I said before the idea is crystal-clear that there ought to be in legislative form some kind of obligation upon telephone companies in Canada to produce a number that would be easily remembered by people who have cause to fall into emergency circumstances. The question, however, is whether or not the proposal the hon. member has put forward is really necessary.

I listened with some interest to the speech given by the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert), who indicated all the areas in Canada in which this idea is being put into effect. I think it is important to point out to the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock that the areas he described in which this process is going into effect are outside federal jurisdiction. In other words, the idea has been accepted, not only by the telephone companies but by all the agencies with whom they must deal, and the process has been set in motion. The question I would put to the hon. member is this: if what he proposes to have done is in fact being done, is it necessary for us to enact legislation? I believe that it is not necessary; that it is a waste of time of the House of Commons to pass redundant legislation or to pass legislation to confirm what is already going on in jurisdictions which have the actual responsibility.

I admit this perhaps might be a small point, but it seems to me it is a very bad habit for a legislative assembly to