

pany do not differ from those of any other corporation operating under a Dominion charter. No other charter, that we are aware of, carries with it the right to make use of other people's property without compensation. Even railway companies have to buy the land necessary for their operations within all municipalities, therefore we fail to see why the Premier should betray such timidity in dealing with the telephone monopoly.

However solicitous the Government may be for the "vested rights" of the Bell Telephone Company, that corporation cares little for the interests of the telephone users of Canada, and of the many thousands of people who are debarred from telephone communication by reason of the exorbitant rates charged, albeit the company obtained its charter on the ground of being "for the general advantage of Canada." According to the last report of the Dominion Statistician there were 81,500 telephones in use in Canada, of which 57,172 are operated by the "Bell," and it is a significant fact that if the whole of Canada had as many telephones in proportion to the population as British Columbia, which is furthest removed from "Bell" influence, the total would exceed 275,000.

The telephone is the greatest distributor of intelligence yet invented, and should be cheaply at the service of every inhabitant, but so long as this modern means of communication is used in Canada "for the general advantage" of the Bell Telephone Company, so long will it remain a luxury for the few instead of a boon to the many.



#### A CHANCE FOR A REAL REFORM.

The advent of a new cabinet into power in Ontario and the reorganization of the Temiskaming Railway Commission lead to the hope that a reform will be made in the character of railway commissions and other official organizations for the control or regulation of public works. In Great Britain and most other countries government commissions for the control or investigation of public utilities are composed chiefly of engineers and other practical men. Here in Canada of late years, both in Dominion and Provincial affairs, the controlling element in railway, canal, and other commissions has been political and not technical, and where engineers have been attached to such commissions they have been called in a consultative and not an executive capacity. As a consequence the decisions of these commissions have been governed by political party considerations and not by strictly business considerations, and thus hundreds of thousands of dollars of the people's money are squandered and made to serve the corrupt purposes of partyism instead of being directed to the most efficient and economical methods of constructing and maintaining the public works of the country.

A commission such as that of the Temiskaming Railway, for instance, should be composed wholly of engineers and other practical railway men, and there is no doubt, whatever, that if the new Ontario Government rise to the demands of common sense and honest administration in such matters, by eliminating the politician from works that call for technical skill and special business knowledge, it will fortify itself strongly in the public confidence at the outset. Will it rise at the call?

—The Engineering Review, of London, is severely censuring the British Post-Office for its failure to reduce the postage on magazines coming to Canada. In its January number, which was a special export number, the Review referred to the disadvantage to which the British trader was put in competition with the United States dealer for the Canadian market, by reason of the high postal tariff on technical and other journals. In its next number the Review points out that the act limiting the application of newspaper rates was passed in 1870 when high-class technical magazines were unknown, and the Post-Office continues to pass voluminous papers weighing as much as 2 or 3 pounds, for a halfpenny, while charging nine or ten times as much for magazines of far less weight. "In Canada," the article continues, "there is a growing feeling that political and commercial relations with the home country should be extended, and that the spread of this sentiment is greatly retarded by the handicap imposed on high-class monthly reviews. Such publications are carried at almost nominal rates in the United States and the Dominion, with the unfortunate result that anti-British literature is disseminated throughout the latter country with the most regrettable results. Canada is the most loyal of all British possessions. She stands with open arms offering postal concessions and most valuable privileges in the way of customs regulations, but our own government entirely misrepresenting the feeling of the nation continue to reject all overtures as if they were a bureaucracy acknowledging no duty to the people whose servants they are." It is evident from this and many other expressions of opinion in the daily and technical press that the British Post-Office must soon yield to popular sentiment and grant lower rates between the Motherland and the colonies. When this shall have been achieved, it will be a matter of some pride to Canada to reflect that it was she who first raised the standard of reform in this regard.



#### ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO LAND SURVEYORS.

The annual meeting of the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors was held in Toronto beginning Tuesday, February 28th. The president, C. A. Jones, of Petrolia, occupied the chair, and an attendance of over fifty members was recorded. Otto J. Klotz, of Ottawa, read a paper on Transpacific Longitudes, which was especially interesting, as showing the extremely accurate work done in this kind of surveying. He told of two astronomers who independently measured the circumference of the earth, one working eastward, and the other westward, whose results agreed within one hundred feet. On Tuesday evening, Mr. Klotz gave a lecture on the South Seas, in which he described his work for the Canadian Government in connection with the all-British cable. He dealt in a popular way with ethnological, social, botanical and other aspects of Hawaii, Fiji, Samoa, New Zealand, and other lands visited, and illustrated his talk with views. W. E. McMullen, in a paper entitled "What is Our Future?" suggested that the private practice of surveying should be abolished in Ontario, and that there should be organized a Survey Department, the head of which should be the Surveyor-General, a Minister of the Crown. The deputy Surveyor-General should have complete control of all work going on, and in case of dispute his decision should be final, except in extraordinary cases. Further details of the proposed organization were outlined. This suggestion, though not acted on formally by the Association, seemed to meet with approval.

Other papers presented at the convention were: The Status of Ontario Land Surveyors, by P. S. Gibson. Personal Supervision of Surveys, by J. F. Whitson. Notes on the Cost of Constructing Pipe Sewers, by J. Hutcheon. On Assessments,