

ply to encourage mushroom telephone companies to start up in small towns, and to give them the full benefit of the trunk telephone system that has been built at an enormous expense, and which is practically run at a loss in order to serve the local systems of the companies owning the trunk lines.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. Has this company you speak of a public pay station?

Mr. DUNCAN ROSS. Yes.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. Can a non-subscriber go in to an office and get the use of that service by paying toll?

Mr. DUNCAN ROSS. Certainly.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. Then if he goes into an office and pays a fee and gets the use of the trunk line, why can he not do so over a wire by paying the same fee.

Mr. DUNCAN ROSS. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Maclean) is always so twisted in his arguments that I will not attempt to answer him.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. You need not answer.

Mr. DUNCAN ROSS. If one can telephone from an office there is no reason in the world why he cannot do it over a wire. Does the hon. gentleman from South York (Mr. Maclean) know of any reason why it cannot be done.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. You won't allow him to connect over a wire but you will allow him to go in at the door and pay.

Mr. DUNCAN ROSS. I am perfectly willing he should have all the connection he wants by wire, but I do say that it is absolutely unfair to compel a trunk line company to give a mushroom company the advantage of a bona fide business and of the investment of large capital.

Mr. LANCASTER. If the Board of Railway Commissioners order a proper toll where is the harm?

Mr. DUNCAN ROSS. The point I am trying to establish is, that for instance in the case of the Vernon and Nelson Telephone Company—I am only speaking of what I know—they are to-day carrying messages over their trunk line at a less rate than they can possibly do the business at.

Mr. LANCASTER. If that is proven to the Railway Commissioners, will they not in common sense give an increased toll?

Mr. DUNCAN ROSS. The absurdity of the situation is that to-day the Vernon and Nelson people are carrying messages over their trunk line at the rate of fifty cents for a minute's talk, when a fair compensation for that service would be \$1.50 a minute. How long would a railway commission last in this country which would order a rival telephone company to pay \$1.50 for what the

Mr. D. ROSS.

Vernon and Nelson people are giving to their own customers for fifty cents.

Mr. LANCASTER. If what the hon. gentleman says is correct and if these facts, if they be facts, were presented to the Railway Commission, there would be ample justification for ordering an increased rate.

Mr. DUNCAN ROSS. My experience of some people is that when they are stampered by certain newspapers and certain politicians they do some very unreasonable things.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. It is good liberal doctrine to trust the people all the time, but you seem to forget it.

Mr. DUNCAN ROSS. So far as the amendment proposed by the government tonight is concerned, I am quite prepared to leave this matter in the hands of the Board of Railway Commissioners, but I am free to say that if this amendment declares that the board must do certain things it is a very dangerous power to place in the hands of the board. Even if it only declares that the board may do certain things it is still a very dangerous power to give them, and it is only because I have confidence in the Board of Railway Commissioners that I would support such an amendment.

Mr. SPROULE. If this amendment is any improvement on the other, I think it falls very far short of being what the people of the country expect or what they want. In almost every community there are two systems on every line of telephone, the local system and the long distance, and in many places the two are in separate offices. The local companies coming from the country reach the edge of the town; they want to reach the stores, stations, doctors, lawyers and blacksmiths, and most of these people will have a telephone belonging to the Bell or a private company in their house. A person in the country wishes to call up the doctor, but the village or town will not permit the erection of two or three lines of poles on the same street, and therefore, the Bell Company having first occupied the ground controls the situation to the exclusion of the others, but in some offices the two companies will be in the same house where the wires could be connected in a moment. Very frequently people in the country desire to call up some of these people in the village, but they cannot do it under this, because both companies are operating local systems, and you do not provide for such a connection. Very often, say an implement dealer in the country will want to find out from the station if a piece of agricultural machinery for which a farmer is in a hurry has been received. Under this amendment there is no provision that the Railway Commission can compel the connection of these two lines. Eight-tenths of the business of these lines is of the character I have indicated, and for that business