

BELL TELEPHONE COMPANY—IN COMMITTEE—*Con.*

*Borden, R. L.* (Carleton, Ont.)—*Con.*

crease of the capital required for the purposes of this or any other corporation—5998. If public convenience could be met by having that general legislation in these precise terms before us in advance of our being asked to assent to this Bill, that would be eminently desirable—5999. Can the minister (Mr. Fisher) tell me where the amendment, as reported by the committee, can be found?—6005.

*Bureau, Jacques* (Three Rivers)—6006.

The subject before us is the Bill of the Bell Telephone Company asking for an increase of capital—6006. If the company apply for an increase of capital, it is because they want it. Quotes list presented to directors in December, 1905, for work of construction and reconstruction—6007. I do not care what company comes before parliament, it ought not to be singled out and its charter made subject to special restrictions which do not apply generally—6008. Did Mr. Ethier say that there had been any complaint against the Bell Telephone Company in the slightest?—6009. Does the hon. member (Mr. W. F. Maclean) mean to say that if these amendments are not passed he would not grant this increase to the Bell Telephone Company?—6011.

*Fisher, Hon. Sydney* (Minister of Agriculture)—6004.

When the tolls are reasonable, it is obvious that it is to the advantage of the public that the telephone business shall be in the hands of one company and one company only—6004. It seems to me that this meets fully the demands of the public—6005. In that case they will require to interchange messages—6006. I do not see any necessity for holding up this Bill at present—6014. When the public interest requires it, then free interchange should be given so that the public may get a reasonably cheap and efficient service—6015. You must give another company all the privileges and advantages of your connections if the public interests demand such a course—6016. I have no right to demand that that corporation shall give any kind of service I want, unless I am ready to subscribe to it—6017. If the public interest is safeguarded by requiring an efficient service, that is all we have a right to provide and ask for, and it is provided in this amendment—6018.

*Foster, Hon. Geo. E.* (North Toronto)—5997.

It seems to me we might dispose of this legislation before we undertake to give the Bell Telephone Company their extra capital—5997. The question might be discussed how far the request of the company depends upon favourably safeguarding the municipalities in the clauses to be introduced by the Railway Act—5998.

*Emmerson, Hon. H. R.* (Minister of Railways)—6002.

Section 25, with other sections, was referred to the Select Committee, which

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recommended to the House the following amendment. Quotes amendment. When the Bill is in committee, I intend to move that the amendment be expunged and another substituted. Reads proposed amendment—6002.

*Kemp, A. E.* (East Toronto)—5996.

Is the report of the committee satisfactory to the government, and do the government intend to adopt that Bill as the committee reported it?—5996. There are other reasons than those pointed out this morning which have led certain members to believe that this Bill should not go through until the amendments to the Railway Act regarding telephones become law—6008. This company should be put in exactly the same position as the other telephone and telegraph companies which have been organized more recently—6009. I want the company to increase its capital and extend its business; but I want it to carry on its operations under proper restrictions in the public interest—6010.

*Lancaster, E. A.* (Lincoln and Niagara)—6000.

We passed this Bill in the committee, relying on the fact that the then Minister of Justice said that the House would deal with the amendments before this Bill was allowed to pass—6000. If the company are to have increased capitalization there should be regulation—6001. If this Bill is proceeded with before we know what these general clauses are we will have to ask the House to put a lot of clauses into it for the sake of safety—6002. But suppose no amendments are made?—6007. Is the hon. gentleman (Mr. Bureau) willing to have these same clauses put into a private charter that we want put into the general law?—6008. I do not know what the rights of the Bell Telephone Company are in this House as against the people of Canada—6021.

*Laurier, Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid* (Prime Minister)—5996.

The report of the committee is before the House, and the Bill of this committee is before the House. They must be taken one after the other—5996. It will be for this parliament to look into that measure and see whether they approve of it—5997. This is not a government measure, and my hon. friend (Mr. Maclean) has no right to say the government has no right to do certain things—6000. Unless we make progress there is danger that this private legislation will not go through—6010. The government made no promise except to introduce a Bill to bring telephone companies under the control of the Board of Railway Commissioners, and that promise they have carried out—6012. We have thought that we might let the Bill go through the committee and reserve its third reading until we have amended the Railway Act, after which the third reading will become the first order of the day—6022.