

INTRODUCTION

The invention of the telephone has probably produced more important social reactions than either the railways or the telegraph, although the telephone was introduced only forty years since, while the railway is nearly a century and the telegraph about three-quarters of a century old. The rapidity of the development of the telephone and the wide extension of its use have resulted from the application of the inventive genius of a large number of persons and from the encouragement of this genius by private enterprise, especially in America.

In Europe the telephones are now very generally owned by the Governments of the respective countries in correspondence with the view of the character and functions of the State which has developed in Central Europe during the past seventy-five years. This view involves the more or less complete subordination of the individual to the State and places enormous industrial and financial power in the hands of the governing groups. This power has been used to the full during recent years to establish and to continue the political pre-eminence of these governing groups. The interests of the public are lost sight of