

*Corporations and Labour Unions*

objective of this legislation is concerned. Yet a company like the B.C. Telephone Company, which is very much involved with the announced objective of this legislation is going to be able to continue to escape public knowledge of its operations. In my opinion, this course of action borders on the height of irresponsibility. It reminds me once again of what I said a number of days ago. I am becoming more and more convinced that this whole bill is nothing more than a bunch of political eyewash, intended only for the next election campaign.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Will the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam permit me to ask him a question?

**Mr. Regier:** Yes.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Does he not think that this problem about which he is talking, and I agree with what he has said, may be solved by that great, super-socialist, the premier of British Columbia?

**Mr. Howard:** He is not a socialist, he is a fascist.

**Mr. Regier:** The B.C. Telephone Company, in my opinion, has been permitted over the years to escape the jurisdiction of our provincial government. I am quite prepared to accept the concept that it might also be nationalized like the B.C. Electric or could be expropriated. However, unfortunately for the telephone users of British Columbia, the B.C. Telephone Company has managed to hoodwink the banking and commerce committee of this house on ever so many occasions, and by slow but sure degrees has completely escaped provincial jurisdiction.

**Mr. Fulton:** I am sorry the hon. member overlooked the information I gave the committee earlier when I was referring to the Railway Act, where I pointed out that the Bell Telephone Company, being a telephone company covered under the Railway Act, is required—not just “may be called upon” but is required—to report at least annually to the board with regard to its assets, liabilities, capitalization, revenues, etc., in accordance with the forms and classifications for the time being required by the board. Such returns must be made in duplicate under oath.

Then, I did not tell the committee, as I was going quickly in order to summarize, that a duplicate copy of such returns, dated, signed and attested in the manner aforesaid, shall be forwarded by such company to the dominion statistician within one month after the first day of February of each year. There is, therefore, already a duplicate reporting requirement and, in effect, we would be triplicating the requirements. The short answer

[Mr. Regier.]

is that this company, as well as other telephone companies referred to, are required to report such particulars and in such form as may be required by the board. Copies of their returns go to the dominion statistician where they are available for publishing in summary form.

I am satisfied, the more I consider the matter today, that what we are called upon to do in the amendment would be not really asking them to duplicate but to triplicate their reporting burden.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I listened carefully to what the minister said about the reporting requirements. There was no mention of the fact the company had to report foreign ownership which, according to the minister, is the real point of this bill. This is the reason we are putting forward this amendment. It is true that they have to report all these other things, but there is not a word there as to how much of it is foreign ownership, which is the whole purpose of this legislation. Here are two great corporations, the Bell Telephone Company and the B.C. Telephone Company, and other companies, that will no longer be required, even if this bill passes, to report on foreign ownership. We say they should not be exempted from that, and it should not be done by this backhanded method, through the council chamber, by the government asking the chairman of the board of transport commissioners to change the forms. Parliament should do it. Parliament is going to make a law for the Maritime Telephone Company and that law should apply to the B.C. Telephone Company and the Bell Telephone Company. They should not be exempted.

**Mr. Regier:** The minister objects to the company having to make three reports instead of two. I am only a humble member of parliament but I have a secretary in my office and on ever so many occasions she has been able to type out eight copies of a report with no added expense whatever. I fail to see the terrific injustice that the minister implies would be imposed or the burden that would be imposed upon these companies if they had to make these copies available under the terms of this legislation.

There is another point that was raised by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate. The existing demands upon these companies do not call for a proper disclosure of the extent of foreign ownership. This is the whole objective of the bill, according to the introductory statement of the minister. However, he is now willing to accept as adequate, returns that do not include this information.

I can recall a number of occasions when, as a member of the banking and commerce committee, we had the officials of the B.C. Tele-