

*Corporations and Labour Unions*

its right to require reports with the result that reports will not be forthcoming in the future.

**Mr. Fulton:** Mr. Chairman, I think the committee should surely be aware that there is a question whether a minister piloting a bill of this sort, which is designed to enable the government to obtain information from companies, and from all companies without discrimination, should really accept an invitation to go into the details of a particular company. With regard to the Bell Telephone Company I had no hesitation because, as I stated, the information I gave was from the company's own published annual report. I do not know precisely the extent to which the B.C. Telephone Company is owned in Canada and if I did I do not think I should single out that company here and give that information.

**Mr. Regier:** You gave it for the Bell Telephone Company.

**Mr. Fulton:** I gave it for Bell Telephone because Bell Telephone has published it. I told the committee where I got it from at the beginning, but I do not think I should go through the exercise in the manner suggested, as I would be doing if I accepted the invitation to tell the committee about this or that named company. I am not going to start to do so.

Our object is to place the government in a position where it will have the information. Those parts of it that can be made public in accordance with the act will be available for inspection, and the rest will be information available to the government and published in summary form.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** The minister has really put forward the most extraordinary argument we have heard in the course of the debate on this bill. He is asking us as a legislative body to exempt four companies only from the operation of this legislation under part 15 of the schedule. There were five companies, but Canadian National Telegraphs would be exempt in any event because it is government owned, so there are only four. The minister says that every other telephone company with revenue of more than half a million dollars must report, and must report its foreign ownership. But surely the only excuse the minister can have for exempting these four companies is if he knows and is able to show us by the figures that these four are already reporting their foreign ownership, not in some document that they themselves circulate to the public and may stop issuing next year, but in a public document in the possession of the board of transport commissioners. Because the only argument

the minister has given for exempting them is that they do report to the board of transport commissioners. The whole point is that unless they report precisely the same things to the board of transport commissioners they should not be exempted from this legislation, and it should not be left to the government to treat them as little pets and ask for the information or not as it chooses.

It seems to me that the minister should show us that this precise information is now available, not that it will be some day in the future if the government chooses to act. We do not know how much power the government would have over the board of transport commissioners under other legislation to compel the board to ask for this information. This is a terrible way to leave the law. For the minister to say that he should not give these details is not nearly good enough. After all, we are putting a burden on all these other companies and he is saying that these four should be exempt because they are under the control of the board of transport commissioners. That does not make any difference unless they are now giving or have a legal liability to give to the board of transport commissioners precisely what we are asking other companies like the Maritime Telephone Company to give under this legislation.

**Mr. Regier:** Mr. Chairman, I want to be fair to the minister. I do not recall his saying that the B.C. Telephone Company reports to the board of transport commissioners. My recollection is that all he said was that they may be required to report and that if requested to report they would have to do so. He was a little vague as to exactly what they would have to report. That is the whole bone of contention as far as I am concerned because I can remember that a number of years ago we had a royal commission in British Columbia to investigate the activities of the B.C. Telephone Company. After only one year of investigation, at fantastic expense to the taxpayers of our province, the royal commission threw up its hands in disgust and admitted utter defeat. They became involved with telephone and telegraph lines in Honolulu during their investigation, so this company is part of an international cartel, as the minister well knows. He knows that our board of transport commissioners has never attempted to get the background of the financial story of this company, and I submit they have the machinery to do so.

The minister now says that a little telephone company relatively speaking, will have to spend hundreds of dollars in accounting fees in order to supply the necessary information which I submit, in the main, will be completely useless so far as the announced