

*Newfoundland*

**Mr. St. Laurent:** Not everywhere, but in a general way they are operated as one service. They are not entirely separate. Publicly-owned telecommunication services was the expression used to cover publicly-owned telegraphs and publicly-owned telephones; and at some points there are even, I understand, radio communications which are also publicly-owned.

**Mr. Coldwell:** Is this similar to the British system under which the post office operates the telegraphs?

**Mr. St. Laurent:** Yes.

**Mr. MacNicol:** In places such as Corner Brook, which is a substantial community, or Grand Falls, or Curling and other substantial communities, would the telephone and telegraph offices be in the same building? It is good sense to me if they are, because it cuts down extra rent. In the towns where there are railways, are the railway offices in the same building?

**Mr. St. Laurent:** I am not in a position to supply accurate information on that. I have not had the good fortune the hon. member has had of visiting these places on the island, but I understand that all these communication systems were operated by the government, and wherever it was possible to have one public servant take care of the various aspects of the communications system that was the practice. There may be other places where one official would be charged with a special portion of the responsibility and another with the other portion, but they were operated as one public utility.

**Mr. Coldwell:** The point I had in mind is this. This is under the British system. In Britain the telegraphs and telephones are all operated by the post office. When we take over the post office and we take over the postal telegraphs and telephones, which differs from what is done in other parts of Canada, is it the intention of the government to recommend that we continue to operate them as one service? It seems to me that that is the proper way to operate these communications. I have never been able to see why it is that in our country we have the telephones operated in one province by a provincial company and in other provinces by the Bell Telephone Company, and the telegraphs operated by railway companies and so on. It would be much more economical to have the whole thing under one heading. It has worked out very well where it has been done, as it has been done in most countries. What is the intention of the government in this regard?

**Mr. Chevrier:** Perhaps I can help the hon. member, if I may. As the hon. gentleman says, the position in Newfoundland with reference to telecommunications is entirely different from that in Canada. The radio service is divided into two parts, the first part having to do with telephone and wireless and the other part having to do with ship-to-shore installations. That latter part will be taken over by the Department of Transport and operated as such. The former part, the part to which my hon. friend addresses his question, will be taken over by the government. So far it has not been determined whether the Canadian National Telegraphs will operate it but I presume it will. If it does, the Canadian National will move in and operate telephones, telegraphs and radio having to do with telecommunications.

**Mr. Coldwell:** It will take over both telephones and telegraphs? Is that the idea?

**Mr. Chevrier:** Yes, it is the intention that the Canadian National Telegraphs will operate the whole telecommunications services as they now exist on the island.

**Mr. Pearkes:** It is not the intention of the government to operate government telephones in the same way as they are operating government telephones in several parts of British Columbia at the present time?

**Mr. Chevrier:** There is a distinction in certain parts of eastern Canada and western Canada with respect to telephones. I do not know what my hon. friend has in mind. In certain parts of Canada the government has entered into contracts with associations or companies to operate telephone services. That is not the intention thus far in Newfoundland. But it will not be possible to reach a conclusion until the officers of the Canadian National have made a complete investigation. On the basis of the information we have before us, the intention is as I related a moment ago.

**Mr. Pearkes:** Does not the government operate certain telephone lines on the west coast of Vancouver island, for instance? Is it not the intention to operate in the same way in Newfoundland?

**Mr. Chevrier:** No.

**Mr. Coldwell:** Is that not placing a further burden upon the Canadian National Railways? As the hon. member has said, on the west coast of Vancouver island there is a government telephone line, because the distances are so great and the usage so infrequent that the cost of operation is high. It is a public service rendered by the parliament of Canada to a sparsely scattered