

CHEAP TELEGRAPH RATES.

ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
CANADIAN PRESS ASSOCIATION, FEBY. 28TH, 1902
BY SIR SANDFORD FLEMING.

MR. PRESIDENT.

You have been good enough to invite me to address this meeting on Cheaper Telegraph Rates, for the reason that my name for some years back has been identified with the subject. I regard it as a high privilege to be allowed to address a body of men representing the recognised organs of public opinion. You have paid me a great compliment, and my satisfaction is enhanced by the fact that I have been asked to speak on a subject to which I have long and earnestly devoted my attention.

Ruskin tells us that "the weakest among us has a gift; however seemingly trivial, which is peculiar to him and which worthily used will be a gift to his race." Whether Ruskin be right or wrong, I have indulged the thought, and acted on the belief, that however feeble the force, persistency of effort will, in the long run, make up for lack of power. Imbued with this idea, I have for over twenty years imposed upon myself a task closely associated with the subject which you have given me,—a task which has led me, without hope of personal reward, to visit five continents and traverse all the great oceans—one of them, the Atlantic, many times. In this self-imposed duty, I can at least say that however poor and inadequate the services, they have been given willingly and without stint.

Such being the case, I rejoice to have the opportunity, which you have given me, to throw some light on a problem of great public importance which I have been doing my share in trying to work out. I shall commence by expressing the satisfaction which I feel that this association is deeply interested in the same problem, and that, at the last annual meeting, you took important action respecting it. I am very proud to rank myself as a co-worker with you, inasmuch as I have the most exalted opinion of the power and mission of the Press. I feel that anything that I have done, or anything that I can do, is as nothing compared with what you can accomplish.

Examining your records, it appears that resolutions were unanimously passed at your last annual meeting in favour of the Government taking steps to establish a State-owned cable between Canada and Great Britain, and to nationalize the land telegraphs of the Dominion, the charges for the transmission of messages in both cases to be reduced to the actual operating cost. Perhaps I may mention that, on every suitable occasion, during the past year I gave my advocacy and support to the policy and principles laid down in your resolution. Moreover, the present year had barely commenced when I made public a letter on Postal Telegraph Service by sea and land, addressed to the Post Master General, the Hon. Wm. Mulock. It is dated January 1st. 1902, and in the remarks I am about to submit, I