

to Sir Sandford Fleming for his splendid work in reference to cables between Canada and Australia-New Zealand, and also his advocacy of cables between Canada and the motherland. A cable can carry 600 messages in one hour, or 1,900 messages in four hours. Most of the cable business is done between ten o'clock in the morning in this country and three o'clock in the afternoon in England. For the balance of the day 37½ per cent of the cable plant is idle. Thus it is a wonder to me that the cable companies have not materially reduced the cost of cables during these idle hours. England spends \$1,250,000 per annum in cabling to her consuls and ambassadors. Under competition in 1885 and 1886 the present cable rate was reduced to 12 cents a word and cable traffic doubled during those two years which merely goes to show that the cable rates might well be materially reduced.

A word with reference to wireless telegraphy. Wonderful strides have been made in wireless telegraphy, not only on this continent but on others. I am satisfied the day is not far distant when wireless telegraphy will be used to send messages from this parliament to practically every daily newspaper in Canada at a very small cost. I am also satisfied that wireless telegraphy is going to be of great service in the Hudson Bay district. We have heard a great deal about the ice and the winds of that route and we are told that these will interfere with the handling of grain to the motherland but if we have established on either side of the channel wireless telegraph stations we will be able to obtain exact information as to the winds and the drift ice, and so will be able to guide vessels through the channel and navigation will be kept open for months longer than it otherwise would. It is our bounden duty to develop that system not only for the purpose of giving information of this character but for the protection of life and property at sea. We have had striking examples even within the last few weeks of the saving of life at sea through vessels equipped with wireless apparatus being able to send calls for assistance to other vessels.

It is the duty of Canada to undertake the control and operation of our own wireless telegraph stations, and keep from turning over the productive end of all these systems to companies, while we own and operate the lean end. I quote the following from the Montreal 'Star' of Saturday, February 3, last, which is instructive:

Canadian Marconi shares sold as high as \$4.75 (Montreal equivalent) in London to-day. It startles even the insiders who for months past have considered they were not worth more than \$2.00 at the outside. The company

Mr. ARMSTRONG (E. Lambton).

has a capital of five million dollars largely water, and some time ago when the shares rose over \$3.00, several people were said to have sold out and considered themselves lucky to get as much as they did.

Imagine a capitalization of five million dollars, mostly water, and yet we will be asked in the near future to purchase back at an enormous figure from these people a number of the stations they have erected in Canada. It is up to the parliament of Canada to proceed at once to gather information in order that we may have data to go upon in order to purchase or build great lines of communication in our own land which may ultimately become connected with lines in other countries. The total cost of this would not exceed twenty-five million dollars, or just one year's surplus. Then, in five years, when you have completed your trunk system of wire transmission, our post office would be the centre of that great system and incalculable benefits would be conferred upon the Dominion. I sincerely hope the government will grant this commission because I feel confident that if they do so, sufficient statistics will be placed before parliament to convince every member on this side at all events that this great utility should be taken over by the people, and I feel confident that even members on the opposite side of the House would not then dare to oppose such a project.

Mr. NESBITT. Does the hon. gentleman know if it is a fact, as reported, that the price of telephones has been raised materially in Winnipeg, since the provincial government took over the system in that province?

Mr. ARMSTRONG (East Lambton). I have no desire to be driven into a controversy with reference to what the province of Manitoba has done in this respect. I understand that the price of messages has been increased in the city of Winnipeg, but when you take into consideration the fact that they have extended their lines in the rural districts at an enormous expense and granted to the people living in these districts a low-priced telephone service, you cannot wonder that the people in the city who make large use of the telephones should be called upon to contribute.

Mr. NESBITT. I was only asking for information as to whether it was true or not.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (East Lambton). I understand they have increased the cost of messages in the cities to those who are making use of the telephone over a certain given number of messages per day.

Mr. LEMIEUX. I agree in some respects in the remarks of the hon. gentleman about