

But how is the business handled?

Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg, with Halifax and Sydney as the chief cable offices, in the order named, are the principal telegraph centres of Canada. Each of these centres, in addition to handling its local business, is a relay office for telegrams to and from everywhere. Each is like the hub of a wheel, the spokes of which are represented by wires to cities and towns in surrounding districts; while through the hub run trunk lines, like axles, connecting with distant wheel hubs, or relay centres, in Canada and the United States. Of the several hundred wires passing into and through Toronto switchboards many are tapped daily only for testing purposes—such as, for instance, the direct duplexed Montreal-Vancouver and Chicago-Montreal circuits. These are termed trunk lines and have no intermediate offices.

Chicago is the largest relay telegraph station in the world. New York and London, (Eng.), may handle more local business, but Chicago is the great throbbing, pulsating heart core through which flow the briefest stories of love, war, peace, weal and woe from all points of the compass. It is at once the centripetal and centrifugal wheels of the telegraph which gather and disseminate the thousands of messages filed by thousands of persons throughout the continent. Montreal, Toronto, Detroit, St. Paul, Winnipeg, St. Louis and a number of other centres are similiar offices on a smaller scale.

In the main office of the larger of the two commercial wire companies in Chicago an average of 200,000 messages are handled daily under normal conditions. Only one-fourth or less of this number originates in Chicago, the greater bulk of the business being messages relayed for other points. Approximately 1,500 telegraphers perform the work of handling these messages. The general average number handled by each telegrapher every hour, press

specials included, is twenty-two messages. All large offices attain to about the same average.

In Toronto a big day's business for one main office during the busy war period totalled about 20,000 telegrams handled. To form some idea of the telegraph occasioned by an active military, one has but to know that following the signing of the armistice—hence the truncating of war orders—there was a falling off of about 6,000 messages a day for the two companies in Toronto alone.

An extreme case of the travels of an occasional message is afforded in the case of an occasion when a man filed a telegram in Montreal for Vancouver. In this extremity the sender happened to learn that half an hour after filing his message the same message was hanging on the hook in Chicago awaiting transmission to Winnipeg via St. Paul, whence it would be relayed to Winnipeg and thence to Vancouver. This message had been routed first via New York, thence Chicago, for no other reason than to expedite its transmission, because of congestion, obstruction, loss of direct wires or lack of a better route. This, of course, is an extreme case. In this connection the increased number of trunk line wires in recent years has largely obviated the necessity for route circumlocution; and improved methods of quickly locating wire trouble aid in the maintenance of good direct wires.

On the other hand replies from New York or Chicago to Toronto in from two to five minutes are common daily examples of service, especially in connection with stock and grain business; and the service is correspondingly rapid in general business when prompt response is given. The telegraph itself is instantaneous. A telegraph character made on a Montreal-Chicago wire at either end registers simultaneously at the other end.

The larger offices, like a railroad, are split into divisions, each presided over by a chief and assistants who direct and route the business for their