

# THE POSSIBILITY OF PENNY CABLES

**M**R. HENNIKER HEATON, Australian millionaire, member of the British House of Commons, and author and advocate of penny postage, has turned his attention to penny cables. At present it costs 25 cents a word to cable from Great Britain to Canada or vice versa, and 75 cents a word to cable from Great Britain to Australia. Before the Canada-Australian cable was built the charge to Australia was 9s. 6d. The building of this all-British cable, for which Sir Sandford Fleming is mainly responsible, has effected a saving to consumers of one million dollars a year. Mr. Heaton believes that many millions can be saved by government cables across the Atlantic and government land lines and cables to India and other distant British points. Further, by introducing a nominal rate, the cable business would grow as the postal business has grown. His aim is a penny a word for telegrams and cables wherever sent, irrespective of distance.

Just think for a moment what four cents a word instead of twenty-five would mean to Canadians. The business man who sells in Great Britain or buys there could be in daily communication with his correspondents in that country. Every Britisher living in Canada could afford one telegram a week to his friends at home. Distance would be practically annihilated. Business would be stimulated. It would cost no more to wire to Liverpool, Edinburgh or London than it now costs to wire from Toronto or Montreal to New York. Business with Great Britain would increase enormously. Canadian exporters would be almost as close to the British market as French, Dutch, German or Russian exporters. Instead of waiting two and a half to three weeks for a reply to a letter, a business man could send a penny cable and have a reply in three hours. It would be truly wonderful and highly advantageous.

Mr. Heaton claims, though this is disputed, that the carrying capacity of the cables between Europe and America is now 300,000,000 words a year, whereas only 20,000,000 are sent. The cables are idle eleven-twelfths of the time. Keep them busy and the present revenue would be maintained at a penny a word. Five million dollars a year is paid for the use of the Atlantic cables which are idle eleven-twelfths of the time. Instead of paying five millions for the present cables, Mr. Heaton would have the public pay less than half a million and force the companies to make up the deficit by getting increased business and keeping the cables busy. Perhaps his figures are unreliable or too optimistic, but they are his, and the public have always found him fairly trustworthy.

In Australia a message can be sent 3,800 miles through wastes and wilderness by land telegraph for a penny a word. In Russia, a message can be sent from St. Petersburg to Vladivostock, a distance of more than 6,000 miles by land, at less than eight cents a word.

In discussing this question before the Royal Colonial Institute in November last, the Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux, Postmaster-General, then on a visit to London, said in part:

"But our veteran champion of postal improvements is evidently not satisfied with cheap postage alone. According to his definition, the post office is the machinery of thought, but electricity is thought itself displayed in action—the living fire that makes the massive wheels to turn. At this period of the world's history, in face of the refined and perfected strategy employed to appropriate trade, the nation which makes the best use of electric agencies, according to its special needs and circumstances, will be supreme. In his masterly effort of this evening, he has nailed new colours to his mast, with the very suggestive and captivating motto: 'Penny-a-word Telegrams throughout the Empire.' With him, I believe that cheap cabling is the key to all the really momentous problems that

confront statesmen and merchants. It annihilates distance, abolishes delay, bridges the ocean, laughs at the storm, creates trade, nourishes individual and racial sympathies, multiplies strength. Speaking for myself, and for myself alone, I look upon the penny-a-word cable as an ideal, as a blessing, which some day, sooner or later, should be attained and secured. Mr. Henniker Heaton's scheme embraces the whole world. As a Canadian, I am personally and chiefly concerned with what I think Canada might do for herself and the Empire of which she forms so important a part. Canada's interest is defined by her geographical position. Lying as she does in the Western Hemisphere, the link joining Great Britain and Australia, Canada might not possibly do more than to make the most of her position to reduce to its minimum the distance between those parts of the Empire. The All-Red Route will be

## HENNIKER HEATON'S CLAIMS.

1. Cable rates are too high and prohibitory.
2. Commerce is hampered and hindered by present monopolies.
3. Cheaper cables would mean federation and international peace.

## HENNIKER HEATON'S HOPES.

1. I want to secure for my countrymen cheap and perfect communication by telegraph with all parts of the world.
2. The electric telegraph has annihilated time and space, and enabled us to crowd the previous operations of a year into the space of a few hours.
3. The cables of the world are now in the hands of monopolists or cable rings. It is advisable at all costs to put an immediate end to all cable monopolists. We ask that they be bought out at the market price of the day by the Governments of the civilised world.
4. The people of England now pay four to five millions sterling annually for cable communication, yet the charges are so high that only one in a hundred messages is a social or family message. The cables, I repeat, are now for the millionaires and not for the millions. The present high cable telegraph rates are prohibitory to the masses of the people.
5. The British and Colonial Governments now pay nearly a quarter of a million sterling every year for official cable messages. This sum would go far towards the interest in purchasing the cables from the companies.
6. We pay only £700,000 a year for foreign and imperial packet services. Our cables would in Government hands cost us one million in place of four millions sterling annually.
7. The first step is to call a Conference of the Postmasters-General of the world for the establishment of a penny-a-word telegraph rate throughout Europe.
8. The next step is to hold a Conference with the postal authorities of America. The present high rate of one shilling per word yields £1,000,000 per annum. The carrying capacity of the cables to America is twelve times greater than the present work. The majority of the cables between Europe and America are unscrupulously kept idle by the cable monopolists.
9. That the civilised Governments of the world shall abolish political frontiers for telegraph purposes. To show what can be done it is pointed out that in Australia a message is sent 3,000 miles at a penny a word across the territories of six Governments and States.
10. That a land telegraph line can be constructed throughout Europe and Asia at a cost of from £25 to £30 a mile, whereas a cable costs from £200 to £300 a mile. That a land line can carry ninety words a minute and a cable only about thirty words a minute.
11. That Europe, Asia and Africa (and even with short sea gaps Australia can be linked up) be connected by international land lines by arrangements with the various Governments.

one instalment in the right direction. Would not an All-Red Cable be another? Let me point out that, confining herself within the limits of the British Empire, Canada has had a principal share in the great movement which resulted in the Pacific Cable. This cable, owned by the Governments of Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, is operated under the direction of a Board made up of representatives of those Governments. The mere announcement of this new cable caused at once a drop in the rates of the Eastern cables from 9s. 4d. to 4s. 9d. per word, and when the cable was laid there was a further drop to 3s., thus practically saving to the consumers by this last reduction one million dollars a year. Without dwelling at any length on what could be done on the Atlantic side between Canada and Great Britain, I venture to say that still more hopeful results could be achieved. If all postal experience is not belied, there will be, there must be, a large increase in the cable business within a short time. Those who now use the cables will use them more freely. Every reduction in rates would open the door to a class of traders who cannot now afford to use cables, as the cost of cabling

is practically prohibitive. Whilst a penny-a-word cable may be a distant though desirable ideal to reach, yet, in letting down barriers by degrees, would we not be admitting the masses to advantages which heretofore have been the monopoly of the wealthier classes? The cable companies have had a chance for fifty years of showing what could be done with a great public utility which, in my judgment, ought to be at the service of the largest number of the people. The best they have been able to do is 1s. per word—is a word for the settler of the Canadian West, for the small trader, for the toiler, for the middle-classes generally, is unquestionably a prohibitive rate. Mr. Henniker Heaton, who has already done so much for the cause of Imperial penny postage, and who has devoted his life in advocating cheap communications, is convinced that a penny-a-word cablegram is practicable. Politically,

commercially, every one admits that it would be a step in the right direction. The advantages to be won are too obvious to need further comment. I am well aware that objections are raised from a scientific and financial point of view, but many in the audience will remember the stern and relentless opposition made against penny postage, not only in Great Britain, but in various countries. In conclusion, let me express the hope that such a grand idea as Mr. Henniker Heaton has enunciated this evening will be pressed on, and that an unbiased inquiry will be made into its feasibility and prospects of success. The first English sentence I learnt at school was the following one: 'Where there is a will there is a way.'

## Canadian Hymn Writers

**R**EV. A. WYLIE MAHON, St. Andrews-by-the-Sea, N.B., has done his country a national service in his brochure "Canadian Hymns and Hymn Writers." That he has found much that is worthy of discriminating praise is a real tribute to the talent of a young land. Tennyson has said that a good hymn is the most difficult thing in the world to write, because it has to possess simplicity, yet be poetical. Offer any expression out of the common and it ceases to be a hymn. A good hymn has also to be deeply spiritual. Mr. Mahon calls people to task who say that as well look for a needle in a haystack, or for a harvest of snakes in Ireland, as for meritorious hymn-writers in material and as yet unschooled Canada—since we have an interesting group of composers, whose songs are sung far beyond the confines of the Dominion.

This list begins with the first of the sweet singers, Dean Bullock, of Halifax. He was yet young when he wrote for the dedication of his church in 1827, "We Love the Place, O God,"

one of the most beloved hymns of this day. In 1854 he published a volume of "Songs of the Church."

Then are given notes upon Joseph Scriven, Port Hope; to whom we are indebted for "What a Friend We Have in Jesus!" one of the first hymns given by missionaries in many foreign lands to their converts. Many and many a mixed company joins in it. The authorship has been falsely credited to Dr. Bonar. Mr. Scriven was deeply religious and charitable. He published a small volume of hymns, but his death in 1886 was hastened by ill-health and pecuniary distress. He had given freely to others, but had little confidence in the responsive charity of this world.

Dr. Robert Murray, religious editor for over fifty years in Nova Scotia, is credited with fine lyrical gifts. Several worthy hymns of his have been incorporated into songbooks of different churches, six appearing in the Presbyterian hymnal of Canada, and three in the new Canadian Anglican hymn book, where thirteen Canadians found voice. Dr. Murray's "From Ocean to Ocean" is an unperishable national gem.—*Church Life.*