

THROUGH A MONOCLE

THE CITIZEN AND THE CABLE.

CHEAP cable communication is one of the most important modern links of Empire. The Imperial Press Conference did wisely to make consideration of this question its chief business. It is the contribution of greatest value which journalists as journalists can make to Imperial defence. Opinion, after all, rules the world; and nothing makes opinion like the "news" we get of each other's doings. A distorted account of what the colonies are saying or doing can put the mother country all wrong; and the mother country would be very apt to then take action which when cabled back here would set us "up on our ears." Nor can mail letters cure the mischief. I care not who writes your mail letters, so long as you let me write the cables—the first news which has opinion deflected and inflamed before the mailed explanation comes to hand. It is of vital importance that the cabled news between the colonies and the mother land should be copious, cheap, and controlled by ourselves. It should be written by Britons and for Britons; for, with the best intentions in the world, men who write to suit the tastes of other peoples are certain to miss many of the things which matter to us, even when they do not add flavoring which may give our palates a faulty education. Of course, as we all know, the fear in our case is that we may be Americanised. The costliness of getting our news direct leads us to take what we can from the far cheaper services offered by American agencies.

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WOULD it be a matter of indifference to those who hope that the bond between the mother country and the colonies will grow stronger and not weaker, if, at one blow, the press of Canada were to disappear and the Canadian people were to be compelled to watch passing events through the glass of American journalism? The feeling that such a state of affairs would very greatly retard the progress of Imperial unification, implies no criticism of the American press as such. It conveys, indeed, a compliment to that exceedingly and, at times, flamboyantly national journalism. For the patriotic American newspaper man, the United States is naturally "the greatest nation on earth"; its aggrandisement is, in his opinion, not only pleasing to the American people but is an incomparable blessing to the human race; and, consequently, he cannot think of a better fate for Canada than to become a part of the Republic. So much for his politics. In his selection of news, he studies only the tastes of his American constituency. What interests them, he supplies; what they care nothing about, he omits; what they are hostile to, he presents in as bad a light as he can persuade himself that the facts warrant.

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NOW what would be the effect upon the Canadian people if, by some such calamity as is indicated in the foregoing surmise, they were driven to limit their newspaper reading to the American product? It could only be followed by one of two results—the exasperation of the pro-British Canadian reader, or the gradual infiltration

of American opinion into his mental fabric. He would have presented to him constantly the contrasts between the British and American social and political systems in such a way as to show the superiority of the latter; he would find those phases of British politics which interest the United States magnified so as to hide far more important questions; he would learn constantly with what pathetic eagerness the British Lion was striving to win the approval of the American Eagle; and he would never hear that any British public man spent an odd five minutes in considering the position of Canada. He might be forgiven if, at last, he longed to become an American citizen so that he should enjoy some attention at the hands of his late fellow British subjects who dwell in the United Kingdom. Of course, if he were well informed as to the true state of affairs, and realised the fidelity with which his paper was written for its American subscribers his would be the "exasperation" of the first alternative. But if we may imagine another miracle and suppose that he did not know that it was an American paper which he was reading—suppose that it was presented to him as a Canadian publication, and that he believed this to be true—then his cause for "exasperation" disappears, and he can only mourn the blindness of the mother country to the filial affection of her sons.

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THIS is a fanciful way of putting the situation; but it is not wholly aside from the truth. A very great deal of the cable news of most Canadian papers comes to them through American channels. It is only fair to add that the bulk of it is continental where there is not likely to be flavouring of any sort; and that, in continental politics, the American paper of to-day is usually pro-British. But the fact remains that our channels of news supply are in foreign hands and could be turned against the British Empire of the foreigners who control them thought wise. In the case of Britain, several of our more enterprising journals have correspondents in London who send them special news; and the Canadian Associated Press strives to look after things Canadian. But, in spite of these provisions, much of our British news is still foreign in point of view.

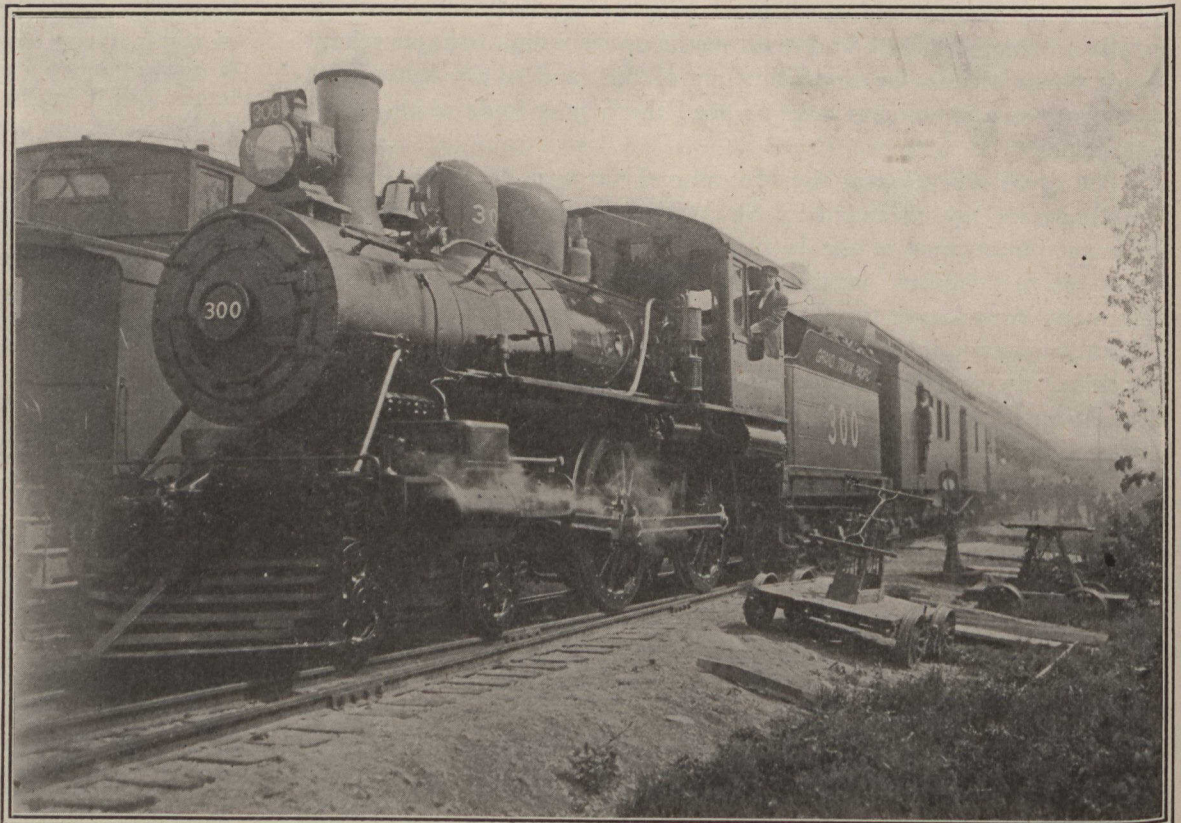
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THE governments concerned should certainly do what they can to assist the colonial newspapers in their earnest and patriotic effort to get "home" news through "home" channels. In some time of crisis, it may mean much to the Empire to have the news services which supply the food for opinion from Halifax to Melbourne in wholly friendly and dependable hands. It is not, as some may imagine, a mere matter of newspaper business. The newspaper proprietors are not simply trying to get their news cheaply. They get cheap news now, and it is interesting enough. They can sell their papers just as well with the New York cables which they can buy at "bargain counter" prices as with direct cables for which in any case they are certain to pay more. But it is a genuinely patriotic desire on the part of the press of Canada to be put in a position of journalistic independence in which they need depend upon no foreign service for their "news from home."

THE MONOCLE MAN.



A. T. Freed, Esq., Grand Master of the Masonic Order laying the Corner Stone of the new Young Women's Christian Ass'n. Bldg., Hamilton, June 19.



The first regular Grand Trunk Pacific Passenger Train leaving Winnipeg for the New Town of Scott 569 miles west. Previous G.T.P. Trains left from Portage la Prairie.