

rates for long distances, such as from London to Scotland and Ireland. In 1835 Rowland Hill, after much study, initiated a bold reform, which by all officialdom was at once denounced as ruinous, and ridiculed as visionary. His chief proposal was to reduce the postage to 1d. a letter, and to make that rate uniform for all distances within the limits of the three kingdoms. After some hesitation by the public, the arguments and reasons advanced by him were found to be so sound that some two thousand petitions in favour of uniform penny postage poured into Parliament. Eventually a Bill was passed, and in 1840 the great postal reform went into operation throughout England, Ireland, and Scotland. For a few years afterwards dire predictions of failure were still heard, but the experience of two-thirds of a century has now amply vindicated the wisdom of the postal reformer, and the reform, which was ushered in with the opening years of the reign of our late beloved Queen, has now been crowned by its extension, in principle, to the worldwide Empire.

Some few years after the adoption of uniform penny postage in the Mother-country electric telegraphy was, as stated, introduced by private companies. The telegraph-lines remained in the hands of the companies for about twenty years, when at length the public interests demanded that they should be taken over by the Government. In 1870 they were placed under the Post Office Department, and, naturally and fortunately, the policy initiated thirty years earlier with respect to the mail-service was applied to the telegraph service—that is to say, the charges on telegraph messages were reduced to a low uniform rate for all distances. It was impossible for that policy to fail of success, seeing that it had proved so eminently successful with the mail-service, and, as already pointed out, the policy initiated by Rowland Hill was even better adapted for the telegraph service than for the mail-service. The year before the transfer to the Post Office Department 7,000,000 messages were transmitted by the companies. With a greatly reduced tariff, the business increased 50 per cent. the first year, and continued to increase immensely from year to year. The total business in the twentieth year reached 94,000,000 messages. In the Postmaster-General's Report for 1895 it is pointed out that, without including the purchase-money of the original lines, the receipts exceeded the expenditure by a total sum of £1,795,000, equal to an average annual surplus of £71,800.

The principle of a uniform low rate for all distances in connection with the mail-service of the Dominion has now been well tested. For the small charge of 2 cents a letter can be sent to, and delivered in, any inhabited part of Canada. The expenditure in reaching the outlying sections, such as the Yukon and Atlin districts, is considerable, but notwithstanding that fact the general returns of the Post Office are most satisfactory. The report of the Postmaster-General for 1906 shows a surplus of more than a million dollars (\$1,011,765.35) in the year's operations. Moreover, the outlook for the present year is believed to be very much better. Such being the case, there need be no hesitation in applying the principle of Rowland Hill's great reform to the telegraph service of Canada.

There is every reason for the reform. There is no necessity for adopting a higher tariff of charges than that which has given so much satisfaction in the Mother-country. The equivalent in Canada would be a uniform charge of 1 cent a word for all distances, and the minimum message may consist of any number of words, from ten to twenty-five, which may be determined. In view of the geographical conditions of the Dominion, there is no country on the face of the globe where the peculiarities of the electric telegraph, and its high value as a means of instantaneous communication between points widely separated by distance can be turned to better account than in Canada.

No less important is the proposal, which has frequently been considered, to establish a State-owned Atlantic cable. It is understood that there is evidence in possession of the Canadian Government as to its cost, its working-expenses, its probable traffic, and all other particulars. The evidence which has for some time been accumulating goes to show beyond all question that, if placed under the control of the Canadian Post Office, the traffic which could immediately be counted on, reckoned at the small charge of 5 cents a word, would be sufficient to cover all working-expenses, interest on cost, and sinking fund to replace capital.

Such being the case, it is obvious that an Atlantic cable under the control of the Canadian Post Office Department, and able to transmit messages at so low a rate, would be an immense advantage to all commercial men. If, however, it should be deemed inexpedient for any reason to commence by lowering charges to 5 cents a word, a beginning might be made at 10 cents a word, a rate 60 per cent. lower than the present tariff, which is 25 cents a word. A reduction to 10 cents, or even 12 cents (6d.), would tend greatly to increase freedom of telegraphic intercourse, and be of incalculable advantage to Canada and the Mother-country, and, indeed, as will presently be shown, to the whole Empire.

His Excellency Earl Grey, in replying to the address of the Ottawa Board of Trade, alluded to the remarkable geographical position of Canada, stretching as it does between the two oceans. There is in truth no part of the twin continents north or south of the equator, other than the Dominion, which commands "an Imperial route between Great Britain and the Orient and those great British Dominions in the Southern Seas of New Zealand and Australia."

This one geographical circumstance greatly elevates the character of the questions discussed in the foregoing pages; it much widens our horizon, and the subjects considered become more than domestic questions relating to Canada alone. We find ourselves on the predestined route of a great highway of the world; we occupy the gateway between the East and the West, the only passage for the All-red Line through the longitudinal axis of America from the Straits of Magellan to the Arctic Ocean.

Viewing the subject from the higher standpoint, the importance of the land telegraph across Canada, from ocean to ocean, and the Atlantic cable from Canada to England, as links in the Imperial chain at once becomes obvious. It will be manifest, too, while both would be of the