

*(February 18, 1907.)*

## Postal Rates on Imperial Periodicals.

BY MR. JOHN A. COOPER AND MR. J. F. ELLIS.

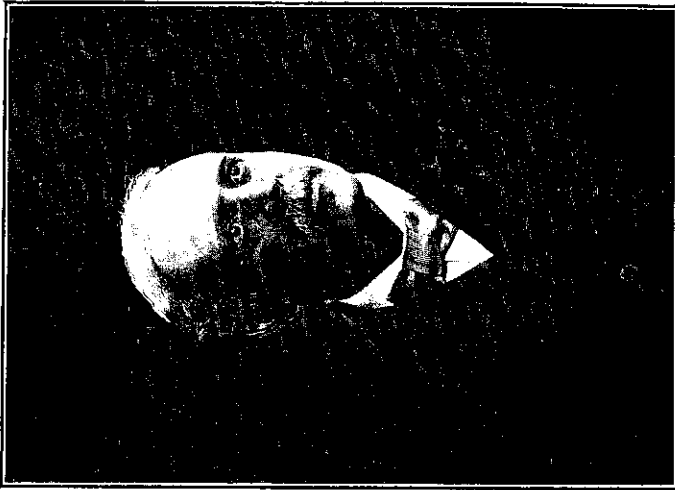
“**P**OSTAL Rates on Imperial Periodicals” was the subject of the addresses of Mr. John A. Cooper and Mr. J. F. Ellis at the Canadian Club.

Mr. COOPER said:

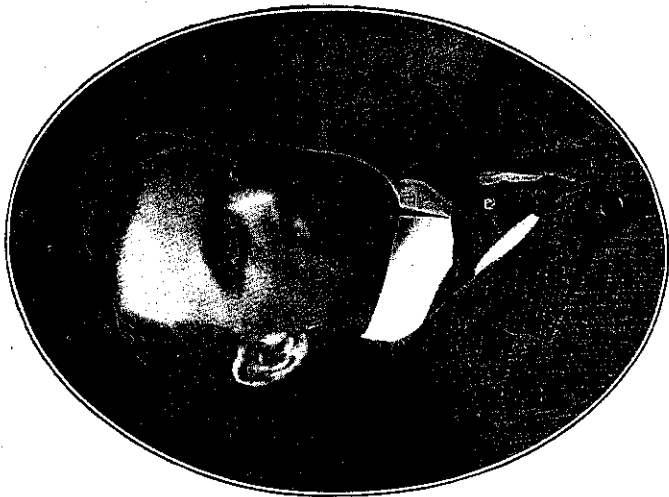
*Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,*—The only regret I have is that I left a very fine impromptu speech at home on Saturday—and it is still there. It is devoted to the subject you, sir, have mentioned. Last week I spoke upon it at the Empire Club—it is, in fact, a subject I have been discussing for years. It may be that I have written and spoken so often upon it that I cannot get a new point of view. The matter was first drawn to my attention by a sturdy Britisher who edits a weekly paper at Orillia. He was then secretary of the Canadian Press Association. I became enamored with the theories he propounded and have ventilated them ever since on all proper, and several improper, occasions.

Your President has come to my home often during a number of years past, and we have discussed the subject often together. If I remember aright, he expressed great indignation that my now two-year-old son should be labelled Henneker Heaton Cooper. Yet of all Imperialists I admire Henneker Heaton as much as any. As a colonial living in Great Britain it has fallen to his ready lot to do a particular piece of Imperial work, that of reducing the postage on periodicals and letters within the Empire. He has taken various means to bring it home to the Imperial Government and earnestly and effectually attempted to educate the great British public on these lines.

Why should we as Canadians so earnestly desire this cheaper postage? There are two reasons. In the first place, if this country is to be British we should know something about our Empire. To understand something of our Empire and the leading men of that Empire we should read the leading publications of the Mother Land. Do we get anything like a fair opportunity to do this? How many British periodicals and publications do we find in Canadian homes as against the flood of current American literature. Most Canadians, I fear,



J. F. ELLIS.



JOHN A. COOPER.

know more about the Governor of New York State than they do about the Premier of Great Britain. We are being brought up on United States literature. This is not proper—and it may be serious in many of its consequences.

Both Canadian and British literature should be put on our market on at least an equal footing with United States publications. But this is not so, and the United States publishers have not been slow to take advantage of the conditions which were created and existed. They discovered that the British Government was charging eight cents per pound on all newspapers, periodicals, etc., mailed to Canada. So they reasoned, "We can mail at the domestic rate of one cent per pound. We'll buy in New York and send the periodicals to Canada, the periodicals for which the Canadian has to pay at the rate of eight cents per pound. Those seven cents difference will give us a surety to the monopoly of the Canadian market."

So the United States publishers took the course indicated. *The Strand*, *Pearson's*, the *Illustrated London News*, and others were bought up at New York. What is the result? Instead of being able to buy the English edition of these periodicals, you get the American edition with the best Imperial articles cut out and United States articles substituted. There is much more than a mere sentimental side to this condition of affairs. It is not best for the country's trade. We need more strength, not weakening influences.

What is the result? Let me tell you a personal experience to illustrate it. Not long ago I had occasion to visit a town in Western Ontario. I went into one of the largest stores in the town and asked for Calvert's tooth powder. They seemingly knew nothing of it. I explained that it was an English tooth powder and was advertised in the *Globe* and the *Canadian Magazine*. They had never heard of it; in fact they had no English tooth powder.

"What?" I said; "no English tooth powder? Isn't the duty lower on it than upon American tooth powder?"

"Yes, sir," was the clerk's reply.

"Then why in the world don't you sell it?"

"Well," he explained, "the people never ask for it."

He had four samples of American tooth powder in the store—and every one cost him more than the English goods did. Yet he had no demand for the latter. The American advertisements in American periodicals created the sales made in his store.

There is an old saying that trade follows the flag. It is turning out to be that trade follows the advertisement. The

reason that British sales are not increasing to any great extent in Canada, while United States sales are so enormous, is not difficult to determine. The British advertisement doesn't reach us and the United States advertisement does.

Now, for I must be concluding, we are asking the British Government to reduce the rate. It now charges \$160 per ton to carry newspapers and periodicals to Canada. After they are landed in Canada the Canadian Government distributes them free of charge. In contrast the American News Company brings them by express and it costs them only \$40 per ton to land them in Toronto.

Take another comparison. The Canadian Government (thanks to Sir William Mulock) reduced the rate for carrying to Great Britain. It is \$10 per ton to Toronto. In other words the express company gets one-quarter and the Canadian Government only gets one-sixteenth.

The agitation for improved conditions has been going on for ten years past. I trust we will keep at it so that the sins of the father may not be visited upon the children, as in my case.

Mr. ELLIS said:

*Mr. President and Gentlemen*,—I had no idea when I was first invited here to-day that I would be expected to speak, nor did I expect to meet such a large gathering. I am pleased, however, to be able to say a word in endorsement of the project to which Mr. Cooper has just alluded. I had the honor last summer to be a delegate to the Chamber of Commerce that met in London, England. I had also the honor to move a resolution along the lines which have been spoken of, and I can assure you it met with most sympathetic attention.

The British Empire is the pioneer in cheap postage. And it thus seems doubly strange that with such a simple proposition so much difficulty should be experienced with the Postmaster-General. Perhaps it may be that, as you are aware, in England they have no customs tariff like they have in Canada. They depend on other sources of revenue and one of the principal of these is the Postoffice Department. The United States has a deficit in the revenue of this department of ten to fifteen millions, and the proposal has been made to change the regulations in relation to postage on periodicals.

When the agitation was on in England to reduce the price of letters it met with much opposition. People were afraid of a deficit. Sir William Mulock met it and the deficit was wiped out and there is a surplus. No one more than Gladstone realized the advantage of keeping close relations in such matters.

May I quote his memorable words: "Think what a softening of domestic exile; what an aid to keeping warm the feeling of family affection, in mitigating the rude breach in the circle of the hearth."

That is the spirit. Every Britisher in this country should be able to get his home magazine here at the same price as in the British Isles. An American can do that, while to get an English magazine the postage in almost every case is more than the cost of the magazine.

I am going to read you an extract from the address of Mr. Parkes, M.P., of Birmingham, who spoke on this matter at the Congress:

"Mr. Parkes, M.P. (Birmingham), said he would like to draw attention to a question between the two countries which was more important than the question of the postal rates between England and Canada. No one who had been in Canada could fail to see the way in which that country was being deluged by American literature, and he must say it was very unfortunate that the young people of Canada should be brought up almost entirely upon American literature, and very rarely see anything in the nature of English literature. Now, they all admitted the grievance. They must, he thought, have some regard to the position of the English Government at the present time. He quite agreed with General Laurie when he said that England could not afford to lose four millions of revenue from the British Postoffice. England's sources of taxation were so taxed to the uttermost, and her expenditure was going on by leaps and bounds, that he was sure the Parliament of this country would not consent for one moment to lose the revenue it got from the Postoffice. There was no doubt about it, that the English Postmaster had difficulties which he was afraid the meeting did not fully appreciate. There was such a thing as the Postal Union, which governed to a certain extent the matter under discussion. There was the domestic rate, and there was the rate to different countries in the world and to different colonies. They all, of course, helped to regulate the matter, and those were difficulties which the Postmaster-General had to face. But he would like to say that within the last few days he had had the pleasure of a conversation with the English Postmaster-General upon the question. The Postmaster-General said that for some time past he had been in communication with the Canadian Postmaster-General and the Deputy Postmaster-General upon the question, and he was most anxious to give some relief to Canada. Of course he was met by the fact that even a 4d. rate to Canada upon books and

catalogues did not pay at the present time. He (Mr. Parkes) believed that the only department of the Postoffice which might be said to pay was the penny postage; that produced nearly all the revenue which they had at the present time. The half-penny postage and the book postage, he believed, were departments of the Postoffice which did not pay. Still, Mr. Sidney Buxton was quite alive to the importance of the matter and he was making representations to Canada upon the subject, and he might say in that connection that he thought it was a capital thing that the question should keep on coming up at the Congresses, because it had influenced the Postmaster-General of England, and it certainly had influenced the postal authorities in Canada at the same time. It was said that the question rested with England, and so it did, but they had difficulties, of course, and he wished to impress upon the meeting that the discussions that they had at the Congresses were not lost upon the British Government. The Postmaster-General had told him: 'I should be glad if you would assure the meeting, when you have an opportunity of speaking upon this matter, that I myself am doing all I can in connection with the Canadian authorities to reduce in a substantial extent this matter. I hope you will not go into details as to how it is to be done, but I certainly have this matter at heart, and before long I hope the arrangement will be made by which there will be a considerable reduction upon this class of postage, which is so important in the interests of Canada.' (Hear, hear.) He was very glad to say that they had a Postmaster-General who sympathized with them. He did not say that the last Postmaster-General did not sympathize with them; he believed he did. He thought they would have some relief in the matter, and they would try to do away with the anomaly which existed at the present time in the postal rate between Canada and this country and this country and Canada. He believed before long that their representations would have the desired effect. (Cheers.)"

So we must not think that Great Britain is not alive to the matter. The Postal Union has to be consulted. The Postmaster-General has said that the reduction would mean four millions sterling. This is very important to them and must be considered. But the possibilities and desirabilities of the change are being made more evident every day.