

The capacity of a single cable had for several years been obviously inadequate to carry the large volume of traffic arising out of the introduction of the cheap-rate cable services and it had become imperative to provide increased cable accommodation. When the first part of the programme for duplicating the cable was carried out in 1923, it was not expedient to complete the project, as a new method of cable-construction was then in the experimental stage. The new method has proved a considerable advance upon the old method for long cable sections. It embodies the idea of continuous loading—*i.e.*, surrounding the conductor of the cable with a winding of special alloy of high permeability—the result of which is greatly to reduce the attenuation of signalling-impulses, and thus to make possible a greater speed of working. The capacity of the Board's new cable is thus much greater than that of the original cable, and places the Board in the favourable position of being able to afford expeditious handling to a large volume of additional traffic.

It is interesting to note that the Bamfield – Fanning Island section is the longest stretch of cable in the world. It is nearly 3,500 nautical miles in length, and the depth at which it is laid is in some places as much as 3,400 fathoms. The work of laying the cable necessitated the employment of two cable steamers. The total cost of duplicating, including the cost of the new cables laid in 1923, was nearly two and three-quarter million pounds. The cost has been met out of the Board's reserve funds; consequently, the associated Governments will not be called upon for a contribution. The cost of the original cable laid in 1902 was £2,000,000. The expenditure of such a large amount of money upon the extension of cable facilities with the Dominion and the Commonwealth can be regarded as proof of the faith that exists in the future commercial progress of the two countries.

The traffic carried by the cable has been to a certain extent an index of the progress of the Dominion. During the first year of operation the cable carried less than a quarter of a million words. The number of words increased from two million in 1911–12 to over eight million in 1915–16, and for the year ended 31st March, 1926, the cable handled twelve million words.

The new cable was opened for traffic from the 22nd November, 1926.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION OF PACIFIC CABLE BOARD.

The question of amending the constitution and powers of the Pacific Cable Board was discussed at the recent Imperial Conference. It was considered that the Board had reached a point in its development when its operations should be freed from the veto of the British Treasury. It was conceded that the representation of the British Government on the Board should be reduced from three members to two, thus giving Great Britain the same representation as Canada and Australia. It was further considered that the appointment of Chairman of the Board should no longer be the prerogative of the British Government. Fresh arrangements were outlined regarding the amounts to be placed to a reserve fund for the purpose of meeting the cost of maintenance and extensions to the system. A scheme was also evolved for the allocation to the Governments concerned of profits from the undertaking. A Bill on these lines was recently submitted to the British House of Commons, and will no doubt eventually be passed into law.

REPRESENTATION OF NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT ON PACIFIC CABLE BOARD.

From the 1st August, 1926, the Hon. Sir C. J. Parr, K.C.M.G., replaced the Hon. Sir James Allen, K.C.B., as New Zealand Government representative on the Pacific Cable Board.

PACIFIC CABLE BOARD APPOINTMENT.

The great development of cable business in the Dominion justified the Board in appointing a Business Manager for the Dominion. The choice fell on Mr. A. T. Markman, who retired from the position of Secretary of the Department on the 31st October, 1926, to take up his new duties. In Mr. Markman the Board has secured the services of a gentleman well fitted by his expert acquaintance with telegraph matters over a long period of years to take such a position.

REDUCTIONS IN CABLE RATES.

The service of daily letter-telegrams was extended from the 17th March, 1927, to messages exchanged between New Zealand and the United States of America.

From the 3rd February, 1927, the ordinary rate to Labrador via Pacific was reduced to 2s. and the deferred rate to 1s. 1d. per word. From the same date the ordinary rate to Newfoundland via Pacific was reduced to 1s. 10d. and the deferred rate to 11d. per word.

It is satisfactory to record that from the 1st February, 1927, the cable rate to Great Britain and Ireland by both the Eastern and the Pacific routes was further reduced to 1s. 11d. per word for the ordinary rate and 11½d. per word for the deferred rate. The rate by the Pacific route to all Canadian States was reduced from the same date by 3d. per word for ordinary and 1½d. per word for deferred messages.

From the 1st February, 1927, the Government rate to Canada and Newfoundland via Pacific was reduced by 1½d. per word.