

It will require the strongest arguments to satisfy the Home authorities as to the expediency of granting a subsidy. They will have to throw overboard their protecting care of the interests of the Eastern Extension Company, and in some other way recognise the claim of that company to consideration. I may mention that this phase of the question has not escaped my earnest consideration, and I have taken upon myself to offer a solution, which you will find in a memorandum dated the 26th September 1887, a copy of which I enclose. In my judgment it is for the Home Government, not for the colonies, to offer some such solution to the Eastern Extension Company, and whatever course the company may follow, whether they accept or reject the offer, the Imperial Government, having submitted fair and honourable terms, will feel at full liberty to co-operate with the colonies and Canada in establishing the trans-Pacific cable.

My explanations have extended to greater length than I intended. I only wish to say in conclusion that I am very strongly of opinion that, should every effort fail to secure the aid and co-operation of the Home authorities before June next, when the Conference meets, Canada and Australia should not shrink from the task imposed upon them, even if it be an Imperial task, of establishing a British telegraph across the Pacific. Delays are dangerous, and if the men in office at Home do not yet see the vast importance of a Pacific cable to the Empire they will come to see that the colonial offshoots are not blind or indifferent to the highest Imperial interests. I have demonstrated how Canada and the colonies without any great difficulty can carry out the undertaking, if need be, unaided by the Home Government,—that the undertaking would bring incalculable advantages—would prove immediately productive, and in a very few years become a profitable investment. But again delays are dangerous immediate action is imperatively demanded, as we have antagonists on all sides, in the Eastern Extension Company, in the French Company, and in powerful organizations in the United States.

I have already said that, if the Pacific cable is to be prevented from passing under foreign control and terminating in a foreign country, the colonies and Canada must boldly take the initiative with the full determination to carry out the great Imperial work. Such a course will awaken England to a due appreciation of colonial strength and vigour and national spirit, and it will give the colonies and Canada the strongest possible claim to Imperial sympathy, and assistance in other ways. Such a course will open the great heart of the British people towards their kith and kin beyond the seas in a way in which it has never before been opened.

Sir Charles Tupper, Bart., &c., London, England.

I remain, &c.,

SANDFORD FLEMING.

III.

MEMORANDUM (referred to in Mr Fleming's Letter) respecting the Proposed Telegraph to connect Australia and India with England by the Canadian Route.

Ottawa, 26th September, 1887

At the Conference recently called by Her Majesty's Government to consider matters of common interest to all portions of the Empire, attention was directed to the question of connecting Australia and Asia with England by a postal and telegraph route through Canada.

The discussion was renewed from time to time, and the more the question was considered the more deeply all present at the Conference became impressed with the vast significance of the issues which the new line of communication involve for England as well as for the Australian Colonies, India, Canada, and the whole outer Empire of Great Britain.

On the last day of the Conference the following resolutions were entered in the proceedings (1.) "That the connection recently formed through Canada, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, by railway and telegraph, opens a new alternative line of Imperial communication over the high seas and through British possessions which promises to be of great value alike in naval, military, commercial, and political aspects." (2.) "That the connection of Canada with Australia by direct submarine telegraph across the Pacific is a project of high importance to the Empire, and every doubt as to its practicability should without delay be set at rest by a thorough and exhaustive survey."

These resolutions expressed the united voice of the Conference after the strenuous efforts of gentlemen acting on behalf of the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company to impress the delegates with the idea that a direct telegraphic connection between Australia and Canada was unnecessary and impracticable.

The lines of the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company extend from India easterly to China and southerly to Australia, and they form the only existing telegraph connection between the Australian Colonies and Europe. This company has for years enjoyed a monopoly of all telegraph business, and naturally, solicitous for the future, its representatives left nothing undone to advance views adverse to the projected new line. Day by day Mr John Pender, the Chairman of the company, was in attendance. He was allowed to address the Conference and to circulate documents of various kinds among the delegates, and in every way he used his influence against the project in the private interest of the company he represents. Notwithstanding those efforts, the above resolutions were adopted, and it is not a little remarkable that they are the only resolutions which were formally submitted and unanimously assented to at the Conference.

The arguments offered on behalf of the company were combatted on public grounds by some of the delegates, and during the discussion the Postmaster-General, Mr Raikes, stated very forcibly that it would be absolutely impossible for the English people or for Her Majesty's Government to recognise the monopoly which the company seem to claim, he, however pointed out that while the position assumed by Mr. Pender for his company was one which could never be accepted either by