

interest at which money could be borrowed on a Government guarantee would be between 2½ and 3 per cent. That difference is enough to make the distinction between a paying and a non-paying investment. As to the responsibility incurred by the Governments which guarantee this loan, I think Sir Sandford's statement, which he assures me is taken from the Government blue-books of these colonies, is sufficient to make it appear that the responsibility would be purely nominal. I might instance the case of the Intercolonial Railway. When Canada proposed to build that road the Imperial Government, whose credit was so much better than ours, guaranteed a very considerable amount of the bonds, and we got the money at a lower rate of interest than we otherwise could have done. Yet the Imperial Government has never had to pay a cent of the interest on those bonds. When we have a case like this, in which it is clear that the other parties who would go into the enterprise of laying the cable have it in their power to direct over it a paying stream of traffic, and would be interested in doing so as guarantors of the scheme, it seems to me very clear that neither this country nor any of the other colonies would ever have to pay a cent towards liquidating the cost of that cable. Why should Canada take the initiative in this matter? In the first place, because she is the most important colony and most interested in this cable of any except Australia. In the second place, because Canada has acquired already what it is now fashionable to call the hegemony of Greater Britain. She is the most important in the councils of the greater Empire which lies outside the British Islands. Since the day of the Jubilee celebration, I think that cannot be doubted. Ever since then it is admitted by Englishmen that Canada is not only the leader of the colonies, but the leader of the Empire, in many questions of policy, both internal and external. Canada has already gone a long way on certain paths which are intended to promote, not only her own prosperity, but the unity of the Empire and the mutual co-operation of its different members. It is eminently proper, therefore, that Canada should take the initiative in this matter. I do not speak now as if the initiative remained to be taken. Canada has taken the initiative in discussing this matter and obtaining the necessary information with regard to it. What is required is that she should now take the initiative by being the first to lay down a definite scheme to carry out the plans that have already been fully discussed, and take up her share of Imperial responsibility in this connection. The commercial advantages to Canada of this scheme will be great. We have had for some years a line of steamers plying between Vancouver and Australia, but only within this year that line has ceased to pay and has had to be taken over by another company. Why? Simply because there has not been direct telegraphic communication between Canada and Australia. Where there is no direct telegraphic communication, and no ports of call having telegraphic connections between points so far distant as Vancouver and Australia, where ships can call for orders, commerce is sure to languish as it has in this case. Still more from the point of view of the safety of the Empire, and thereby indirectly our own, this cable would be an agency whose importance cannot be exaggerated. In these days of wars and rumours of wars, and of cutting of cables by one of the combatants to embarrass the other, the necessity of a cable with its terminals on British territory is very clearly apparent. This proposed cable line, according to the most feasible route, will start from Vancouver, and then by way of Fanning Island and Fiji to Norfolk Island, from which it will fork to New Zealand and Australia. The total length will be something over 7,000 miles. The committee in England have fully established the feasibility of laying a cable in these waters at a reasonable cost. Under all these circumstances I am sure that we are in a position to ask the Imperial Government to drop the veil of secrecy which has been laid over the matter at present, and to come out fully and frankly and meet ourselves and the other colonies half way, not only in promising support to this scheme, but in maturing and carrying out the project. There is urgency in the matter at present for two reasons. In the first place, this Eastern Extension Company has been trying to obtain the assistance of the Australian colonies to another route, by way of the Cape of Good Hope, from Australia to England. In the second place, the French Government has a cable from New Caledonia to New Zealand, and steps have been taken to construct another link in a route which would connect New Caledonia with Hawaii, and thence by the American cable with San Francisco. If either of these schemes took practical form, the proposal for the Canadian cable would be at an end, because either of the others would serve the purpose of Australia, if not ours. A profitable and growing trade between Australia and Canada cannot be accomplished by any other means than by this electric communication. We should then be the warehouse for European goods going to Australia and Australian goods coming to England over our great national highway, the Canadian Pacific Railway. I do not bring up this question with any idea of forcing the hand of the Government or urging it to say anything definite in the matter to-night, but in the hope that it will promote such a discussion as will give the Government some idea of the feeling in the House and country, and that there will be such discussion in the country, even in these days of interesting war news, as will call public attention to the matter, and enable the people to see that it is a national Canadian, as well as Imperial, work of great importance, and deserving of more activity on our part. I do not know that I have anything further to add to what I have already said, and to the remarks I have quoted from the greatest living authority on submarine cables, Sir Sandford Fleming. I could give interesting details from the various papers brought down, but, although they would add to the interest of the subject, they would not add to the pleasure of the House to-night. I hope to hear from both sides on the question. I am sorry that some honourable gentlemen are not present whom I would desire to see here to-night. I refer to members from British Columbia on this side of the House—I see one on the other side—who are, to my knowledge, in sympathy with this scheme, but I am forced to bring it on in their absence on account of the nearness of prorogation.

*Sir Charles Tupper.*—I waited, Mr. Speaker, before rising, in the belief that some member of the Government would, in response to the very strong appeal just made by the honourable member for West Elgin (Mr. Casey), favour the House with the position which the Government propose to