

which was recently presented to the Imperial House of Commons by the Colonial Secretary, the Colonial Secretary said that the Imperial authorities were ready to co-operate; willing to co-operate, but that they would not take the initiative, as the initiative should come from the colonies interested. If that initiative is not taken, and if this matter is allowed to drift, the result might be that this hostile cable company may succeed in blocking this very important Imperial scheme altogether. I very much regret that there should have been the delay which has taken place in regard to it. I think it is only too true what was said by the *Standard* in reference to the action taken by our own Prime Minister in England, because I find that in a letter, a copy of which was placed on the table of the House last night, addressed by the Prime Minister of Queensland to Sir Stanford Fleming, this sentence occurs:—

The matter was, as you are aware, discussed at the conference between the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Premiers of the self-governing colonies, held in London last year, and it was with some surprise that I heard Sir Wilfrid Laurier announce during the course of the proceedings that his Government was not yet prepared to give practical effect, so far as the Dominion of Canada was concerned, to the proposal that the colonies interested should guarantee their shares of the cost of the construction of the cable.

It would seem, therefore, that the information possessed by the *Standard* is correct, and that really Sir Wilfrid Laurier's course in London last year had very much to do with the blocking of this most important Imperial work. It is very unfortunate that that should have been the case. From the best information that we can obtain—from the opinion of the Right Hon. Mr. Chamberlain himself, and from the opinion of many other experts—it would seem that this great Imperial work will not cost the people of Canada one cent; that it will not in any way increase the burdens of the people of Canada; that it will be a self-sustaining concern from the very beginning; and that all the Government of Canada will be asked to do will be to give a guarantee. No one has at all ventured to dispute that fact. Under those circumstances I do think that it is unfortunate that there should be any appearance of stickling for the exact proportion which may be guaranteed by Canada, by Australasia, and by the Mother-country. I believe that the benefit to Canada of the Pacific cable would be enormous, both commercially and as a matter of safety for the whole community. No portion of this cable will be laid upon foreign soil, and it will have this other great element of safety connected with it: that it will be a deep-sea cable—a cable that it will be exceedingly difficult for any hostile Power to reach and interfere with. In that respect it would be very different from the cables proposed to be laid by the Eastern Extension Company, which will be cables laid in shallow waters, and which might be readily interfered with. If through any untoward circumstances the people of this country should be deprived of the advantage which the construction of this cable would bring to them, it would be a very great pity indeed. I would venture to urge upon the Government in the strongest way possible that they should do all that they can do to expedite the negotiations, whatever they may be, that are being carried on at the present time.

Mr. Wallace.—I regret very much that the Government have not a more satisfactory statement to make with regard to this cable. Recent events have made it most imperative that some action should be taken in this regard. I have here a letter written by Mr. Parkin, Principal of Upper Canada College, than whom, I think, no one is more capable of giving an intelligent opinion upon the importance of this cable, both from a Canadian point of view and from the standpoint of a great national British work. Mr. Parkin's letter, which I will take the liberty of reading to the House, is as follows:—

Now for the Pacific Cable.—An Object-lesson which establishes its Utility and its Political Urgency.—Editor *World*: The events of the last few days have brought out with startling vividness some truths which a few thinkers have with pain and difficulty been trying to impress upon our British world of late years. These lessons are now being written in letters of flame on men's minds. The importance of coaling-stations, the need of instant communication with every part of the world, the overwhelming weight of naval defence energy, the amazing significance of sea-power, are things which are now in every man's thoughts. Are we British people going to learn, and learn effectively, one great lesson which they teach? Will the events of the past week at last make us realise the immediate necessity for constructing the Pacific cable? It seems to me that Canada is the country which should move in the matter, and move at once. I believe that the whole thing can be done, so to speak, with the turn of a finger. A joint resolution by both Houses of the Canadian Parliament, addressed to the Queen or to the Colonial Secretary, asking that a Royal Commission should at once be appointed, with full powers to arrange for the construction and operation of a cable from Canada to Australia, and to assign the fair proportion of cost to be borne by the different parts of the Empire, would almost compel action in the matter. Canada's guarantees for the initial cost tacked to the resolution would make it immediately effective. Such a guarantee can be given without any risk. Sir Sandford Fleming has proved over and over again that the cable must necessarily pay from the start. We do not contribute to the Imperial army or navy, which protects us, but we can at least show our national pluck and patriotism in a peaceful enterprise like this. The proposal is made in no jingo spirit. To quote the words used by the American Admiral to Mr. Goschen, as they together viewed last summer the thirty-mile line of British battleships drawn up at Spithead: "This makes for peace." The mere idea of the whole might of the British navy—its North Pacific squadron, its China squadron, its Australian squadron, its West African and East African squadrons, to say nothing of the Channel and Mediterranean fleets, or of the flying squadrons, which we now know can be sent to sea inside of forty-eight hours—launched from every quarter of the globe under the impulse of one will and one national purpose against an enemy, presents, in the light of recent events, a picture of prodigious and irresistible power, which, more than anything else, will make nations disposed to trouble us shrink from war. The comparative paralysis which would fall upon this gigantic machinery if the power of concerted action were removed, as it is likely to be without a Pacific cable, cannot be contemplated with equanimity by a nation which has such vast industrial and commercial interests at stake as have our British people. A single battleship let loose on one of our great cities in any corner of the world would in one hour do more damage than would cover the cost of three such cables. If we have men at Ottawa who know how "to take occasion by the hand," now is the opportunity. Not a moment should be lost, for we know how easily the destructive forces of the world may be let loose. British people hold a position in the world where they must do something more than hope for peace; they must, if possible, command it. This is a time when every link in the Empire should be firmly welded, and Canada has the opportunity of welding one of the most important. I am satisfied that the Government at Ottawa would be heartily supported by men of all parties if they boldly and immediately dealt with the question.—GEO. R. PARKIN.

I think that is a pretty good argument in favour of immediate action without requiring any further remarks from myself.