

for a copy of the report of the Committee appointed by the Imperial Government in 1896 to consider the question of a telegraph cable between Canada and Australasia; also, of any reports or correspondence to the Canadian Government from the Canadian representatives on said Committee or Sir Sandford Fleming in regard to the same subject.

But what have we to do with a Pacific cable? the ordinary Canadian may ask. Very much, directly and indirectly. Think what an all-important part the telegraph plays in our ordinary life. How could we get along if there were no telegraph-line, especially when the House is sitting, between Ottawa and Toronto, or none between Toronto and Montreal? Yet, if a letter is posted in any one of these cities, we can get an answer from any other of them the very next day. But how is it with the three greatest divisions of the self-governing British Empire? If we write to Australia or New Zealand, months elapse before we can get an answer. If we telegraph, the message—instead of going directly down the Pacific—goes across the Atlantic and then almost round the world the other way, and at rates that are practically prohibitive. If an Australian telegraphs to us, the message has to be sent, in the same way, first to Britain and then across the Atlantic. In other words, instead of being the half-way house of the Empire, as God has made us, Canada is shunted and side-tracked away up a distant back street. Ought we to be quite content with such a situation?

And what if war should break out? Wars have been since the dawn of history, as they were in prehistoric times also; and wars shall be, for a few thousand years to come; although I believe in the coming of the day when wars shall cease to the ends of the earth, because all nations shall be so knit together by commerce, literature, and the knowledge of the Lord that the disturber or wanton breaker of peace shall be sternly arrested by irresistible forces on the side of order. Then, indeed, "the sword shall keep the sword in the scabbard;" but that glorious consummation shall not be in our day, no, nor in the days of our children. When war breaks out, what next? The Eastern Extension telegraph cables skirt hostile shores, and are at many points in such shallow waters that they can be cut without difficulty. At once, then, Great Britain, Australasia, and Canada are severed, and as completely isolated from each other as they were before the first submarine cable was laid. What a condition for an oceanic Empire to be in! Is it necessary to go into details of what this would mean? I think not. My readers may be credited with the possession of at least a minimum of imagination.

How different would the case be if a cable were laid between our Pacific coast and Australia, *via* Fanning Island and Fiji. The termini and intermediate points would be guarded, and grappling for a deep-sea cable is all but impossible as long as Britannia rules the waves. The unity of the Empire would be preserved even in war, and in peace Canada would be the real half-way house of the Empire, with important consequences to its welfare, which need not be enlarged upon at present.

Why should Canada take the initiative in this matter, when it is infinitely more demanded by the commercial necessities of Australia? I answer, in the words of Mr. Casey, in his speech in the House of Commons, Ottawa, on the 26th May: "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."

Let me add to Mr. Casey's reasons one or two more. In the third place, because it is difficult for Australasia to act, as she is not a political unit, and her whole thought is occupied at present with the problem of her political unification. The British Government cannot be expected to take the initiative, because the share capital of the Eastern Extension Company is owned by people in Britain, including men of great influence in the ranks of the Government and the Opposition, as well as high officials in the departments, and the present value of these shares would be lessened by the laying of an alternative line. The interest earned might actually come down from 18 to 9 or 10 per cent., and men who fear such a contingency are sometimes blind to the public interest. No one wishes to injure legitimate commercial enterprises, but the Eastern Extension has had blood enough, and might well be content now with reasonable profits. In the fourth place, because, in taking the initiative in this matter, Canada would be acting as a partner in the Imperial concern "along the lines of least resistance." She would confer a boon of quite extraordinary magnitude on the Empire by a policy as wise as it is bold, because it could be carried to successful completion without costing the Canadian, the Australian, or the British taxpayer one dollar. So vast is the business, and so steady the annual increase between Australasia and Britain, without counting that between Australasia and North America, the whole of which would come by the new cable, that it has been demonstrated in the return to which I have referred that 40 per cent. of it would pay for interest on capital, maintenance, renewal, sinking fund, and working-expenses, and leave a large margin. That 40 per cent. Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and New Zealand could guarantee, because they own the land-telegraph lines, and control the traffic. Not only so, but another immediate result would be the lessening of cable rates, with the prospect of a steady scaling down, as profits increased, until we could cable between the great sections of the Empire for 1s. a word. What that would mean for binding them together in a close material and moral