position. By having the wires hung within sight of passing trains, the telegraph can be frequently inspected with the greatest possible ease, and faults, when they occur, can speedily be repaired.

Commencing at Vancouver the cable would cross the Pacific to New Zealand and Australia, from Australia the main line would cross the Indian Ocean to South Africa, from South Africa it would traverse the Atlantic to Canada, where it would connect with the trans-Atlantic lines. Such a system of cables would complete the telegraphic circuit of the globe, and would constitute a base for connecting every one of Her Majesty's possessions and naval coaling-stations (Gibraltar and Malta excepted) by the most perfect means of conveying intelligence at our disposal. Moreover, the connection would be formed by a system of all-British deep-sea cables in the position where they would be least vulnerable. This Imperial cable system may be considered in three divisions.

(1.) *Cables in the Pacific Ocean.*

The cable from Vancouver would first find a mid-ocean station at Fanning Island, second at Fiji Islands, third at Norfolk Island; at Norfolk Island it would bifurcate, one branch extending to New Zealand, the other to the eastern coast of Australia.

There are many islands in the Pacific, some under British, others under foreign flags; in course of time these islands could be served by branches as circumstances may require. The land lines of Australia would complete telegraphic connection with the western coast, or it may be deemed expedient to substitute a cable for the land lines over that portion of the interior between Adelaide and King George's Sound.

(2.) *Cables in the Indian Ocean.*

From King George's Sound, or other point in Western Australia, the cable would extend to Cocos Island, thence to Mauritius, and thence to Natal or Capetown, as may be found expedient. Cocos would become an important telegraphic centre; it would be a convenient point for connecting Singapore by a branch cable. Singapore is already in connection with Hongkong by an all-British cable *viâ* Labuan, and Her Majesty's Government can take possession by giving twelve months' notice. India could be reached by a branch from Cocos to Colombo or Trincomalee in Ceylon. At Mauritius a connection would be formed with the existing cable to Seychelles, Aden, and Bombay.

(3.) *Cables in the Atlantic Ocean.*

In order to avoid the shallow seas along the west coast of Africa, Spain, Portugal, and France, it is proposed that the cable should extend from Capetown to Bermuda, touching at St. Helena, Ascension, and Barbados as mid-ocean stations. At Bermuda a connection would be formed with the existing cable to Halifax, and at that point with the Canadian and trans-Atlantic lines.

Much prominence has been given to a proposal to connect England with the Cape by a line of cable touching at Gibraltar, Sierra Leone or Bathurst, Ascension and St. Helena. I pointed out in my letter of last December to Sir Wilfrid Laurier that there are grave objections to the northern half of that route, as "the cable, of necessity, would be laid for some distance in shallow seas where it would be exposed to injury from various causes, and where, too, the agent of an unfriendly nation or, indeed, an evil-disposed fisherman, would have it in his power to destroy the cable with ease, totally unobserved. For hundreds of miles it would be exposed to such risks."

The route now proposed from Ascension to Great Britain is certainly less direct, but the cable would be much less in jeopardy, and to this may be added, the advantage which would result in bringing the West Indian possessions within the Imperial telegraphic circle.

In order that some estimate may be formed of the cost of such an undertaking, I submit the following approximate distances which each group of cables would require to cover:—

	Knots.	Knots.
(1.) In the Pacific Ocean, from Vancouver to Australia and New Zealand		7,150
(2.) In the Indian Ocean, from Western Australia to South Africa—		
Main line	6,500	
Branch to Singapore	1,100	
Branch to Colombo	1,500	
		9,100
(3.) In the Atlantic Ocean, from South Africa to Bermuda ...		6,600
		22,850

The total distance for which new cables would be required (of which 20,250 knots would be in the main line, and 2,600 knots in branches) may be roughly placed at 23,000 knots, and the cost (including the branch to Hongkong) between £5,000,000 and £6,000,000 sterling.

I have long advocated the first division of the proposal,—the establishment of a cable from Canada to Australasia as a State work. I have felt that it would be the forerunner of an all-British telegraph system embracing the whole Empire. As a State undertaking, I am satisfied that the Pacific cable would be a complete commercial succes, and that so soon as it so proved, the cable extension to South Africa and India would follow.

One advantage peculiar to a globe-encircling system of cables will be apparent: each point touched would be in connection with every other point by two routes extending in opposite directions. This feature is of special value, as it practically constitutes a double connection in each case. The projected system of all-British cables with its branches would thus doubly connect the following fortified and garrisoned coaling stations—namely, Hongkong, Singapore, Trincomalee, Colombo, Aden, Capetown, Simons Bay, St. Helena, Ascension, St. Lucia, Jamaica, Bermuda, Halifax, Esquimalt, King George's Sound, and Thursday Island. The following "defended ports" would