

tion to a letter which I addressed the Right Honourable Joseph Chamberlain, of date 28th October, 1898 [Enclosure in No. 28, F.—8, 1899], a copy of which may be found in the Pacific cable return printed last year by order of Parliament [Canadian], page 22. For proof of its desirability and practicability I would further cite the testimony of the British Press, alluded to in the same return, pages 31–32 [see pages 13–19, F.—8, 1899], and I will add that the project has been the dominant idea in the discussion at the colonial Conferences of 1887 and 1894.

In my letter to Mr. Chamberlain I have demonstrated that State ownership of the cables of the Empire is the true principle to adopt, and, among other convincing evidence, I have pointed to the admirable system of land telegraph established throughout the United Kingdom under the control of the Post Office Department.

The telegraphs of England, Ireland, and Scotland were at one time the property of private companies, whose chief object was to make as large profits as they were able to at the public expense. These companies adopted the policy of exacting high charges—in some cases twelve times higher than the present rates—and, like other companies of to-day, they made strenuous efforts to perpetuate the monopolistic privileges they enjoyed. Parliament, however, decreed to put an end to a costly and unsatisfactory service by establishing a national telegraphic system, and by extending the wires to the remotest parts of England, Ireland, and Scotland. As a consequence of the action taken there is now under the control of the State a system of telegraphy most perfect in every respect, and so moderate are the charges that any two individuals of the forty millions of a population, however widely sundered within the limits of the four seas, can at any hour of the day interchange their thoughts at the small cost of 1 cent per word.

These advantages have been achieved by and through State control. Under State control the utility of the telegraph has been enormously increased. It has been extended to every corner of the three kingdoms, and the charges levied on messages have been reduced in an inverse ratio to its increased utility without entailing any burdens on the public exchequer.

Have we not in so perfectly developed and so satisfactory an example a unique model which we would do well to imitate on a larger scale? Have we not a microcosmic illustration of the electric nervous system which we should strive to create in the farther development of our world-wide Empire?

If such a system be worth having, and we desire to possess it, we must never lose sight of the fact—and at this juncture we must especially bear it in mind—that the laying of a cable from Canada to Australia is the essential initial step, and that to delay taking this step imperils the great Imperial scheme. Six British Governments, after many years of prolonged negotiations, have deliberately entered into a partnership arrangement to unite in taking what may be regarded as the first step in the establishment of the world-encircling system of all-British cables. It is impossible to believe that in order to gain some little local advantage of a temporary character any one of these Governments will depart from the spirit of partnership and assume the grave responsibility of putting an end to the prospect of securing eventually the great Imperial project. It is inconceivable that any right-minded British subject with a correct knowledge of the facts, and with an adequate conception of the consequences, would propose or assent to any proposal which would frustrate or endanger the carrying-out of a project so full of promise and in truth so vital to the Empire of the future.

I have dealt with this matter in my letter to Sir Wilfrid Laurier of 15th November last [Enclosure 3 in No. 118, F.—8, 1900], and have ventured to recommend what appears to me to be the only safe course for the several Governments to follow.

The Hon. W. Mulock, Postmaster-General, Ottawa.

Yours, &c.,
SANDFORD FLEMING.

No. 4.

The SECRETARY, Chamber of Commerce, Wellington, to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington.

SIR,— Wellington Chamber of Commerce, Wellington, 17th March, 1900.

I have the honour, by direction of the Council of this Chamber, to forward you the accompanying copy of a cable message from the Postmaster-General of Queensland in reference to the proposed Pacific cable, addressed to the President of this Chamber. I am instructed at the same time to say that this Chamber is strongly in favour of the construction of the said cable, and trusts that the New Zealand Government will continue to strongly support that route.

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
S. CARROLL, Secretary.

Enclosure in No. 4.

The Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Brisbane, to the PRESIDENT of the Chamber of Commerce, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

Brisbane, 10th February, 1900.

LARGE and influential deputation from Brisbane Chamber of Commerce waited upon me this morning to present the following resolution passed by the Chamber at their last meeting, namely: "That this meeting confirms its previous resolution as to the necessity of the Pacific cable, and protests against further delay in carrying out its completion, and urges that the Government of this colony should not relax its efforts to secure the immediate completion of Pacific cable, but if necessary act with New Zealand and Canada to obtain the desired end."

I should be pleased to have an expression of opinion from you by wire as early as possible.