

sideration of the Canadian Government are referred to—(1) the establishment of a State-owned cable across the Atlantic, and (2) the transfer of the land telegraphs of the Dominion to the Post Office Department.

In the discussions and negotiations leading up to the establishment of the Pacific cable, it has always been held that telegraphic communication between Australia, New Zealand, and the Mother country would be transmitted from Vancouver to London by an all-British route. The opinion is therefore entertained that an obligation rests upon Canada to see that such a route, when required, shall be available.

By the end of the present year the Pacific cable is to be completed, and the necessity for transmitting Australasian telegraph business between the terminus of the cable on Vancouver Island and the shores of Great Britain will then arise. The two proposals carried out will provide the desired route, and may be regarded as indispensable adjuncts to the Pacific cable. These measures will at the same time confer benefits of no ordinary kind, both local and general.

In my letter to Mr. Mulock I have pointed out that the charges on messages across the Atlantic may be reduced from 25 cents to 5 cents per word, and that an additional charge of 3 cents per word will suffice for transmission between the Atlantic and the Pacific. These two charges together make a total charge of 8 cents (or 4d.) per word between London and Vancouver.

As Vancouver is not far from half-way from Great Britain to Australia, obviously, if messages can be transmitted between London and Vancouver for 4d. the charge for the whole distance should not exceed 9d. or 1s. per word. This would be a reduction to about one-quarter of the present charges and to one-twelfth of the rates of a few years back. Such a reduction cannot but be regarded with much satisfaction by the Government and people of Australia and New Zealand.

Since the date of the accompanying letter I have had interviews with Signor Marconi on the subject of his recent successful efforts to signal across the Atlantic. The inventor is hopeful and confident that the Marconi system of electric telegraphy, when fully developed, will prove a commercial success, and that it will be possible to transmit messages across the Atlantic for half the rates above mentioned. The Government of Canada, impressed with the prospects and the great importance of the invention, offers Signor Marconi every encouragement and assistance in the development of this new system. The people of Canada will rejoice if the expectations formed come to be realised, as the advantages of cheap telegraphy is fully recognised by them. The policy which finds favour in Canada is to make telegraphy by sea and land not an expensive luxury to the few, but a common convenience to the many.

The expense of submarine telegraphy is practically prohibitive to the majority of people. It is only on matters of great urgency, or those in which large interests are at stake, that cablegrams are sent. Cables are employed by persons in official positions, by managers of large mercantile firms, by the rich, and by those engaged in stock operations, but the majority of people do not use them. By reason of the expense many who now use cables resort to them as seldom as possible.

It is in the general interests that all this should be changed, that telegraphy should be popularised, and every kind of hindrance to free intercourse removed. It is felt that there should be nothing to prevent cables and telegraphs being as freely employed as the penny post. We have placed at our command the means of conquering time and distance, and it only remains for us to take the fullest advantage of such means in order to draw closer kindred people on opposite sides of the ocean. A State-controlled Atlantic telegraph, with the Canadian land lines nationalised, will have this much-desired effect in so far as Great Britain and Canada are concerned. These countries will be the first to benefit therefrom; but the completion of the Pacific cable will admit of Australia and New Zealand enjoying the same. The advantages of cheap telegraphy will, however, eventually be shared by India and South Africa. So soon as Australia and New Zealand rates on messages to Great Britain come to be lessened to 1s. a word, it will not be long before India and South Africa will insist upon obtaining corresponding reductions. Cheap telegraphy by sea and land the world over is obviously not far off. The movement to bring about that great public boon is certain to become general. Its aim, its tendency, and its chief practical result will be, in no limited sense, to vitalise the kinship of the widely severed British people.

I have, &c.,

SANDFORD FLEMING.

The Right Hon. Richard J. Seddon, Prime Minister, New Zealand.

Enclosure in No. 42.

Sir SANDFORD FLEMING, Ottawa, to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Ottawa.

Postal Telegraph Service by Sea and Land.

SIR,—

Ottawa, 1st January, 1902.

I did myself the honour on the first day of the new century to address you, through the public Press, on the subject of "A State-owned Telegraph Service girdling the Globe." On the preceding day six British Governments practically inaugurated such a service by formally joining in the execution of a contract for establishing a trans-Pacific cable from Canada to Australia and New Zealand. This joint undertaking, known as the Pacific cable, may be regarded as the first great ocean link in a projected chain of Pan-Britannic telegraphs under State control.

I felt that I could not too strongly emphasize the importance of the undertaking and the far-reaching influence of the act of co-partnership entered into in the closing hours of the old century—an act, resulting from thirteen years' deliberation, which has been constitutionally ratified by the Imperial Parliament and by the Parliaments of Canada, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and New Zealand.