

It is a matter of great gratification to the Board to know that the Pacific cable is now being established under a joint agreement between the Home Government and the Governments of Canada, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and New Zealand, and that there is every prospect of Canada being connected with the United Kingdom at an early date by a State-owned transatlantic cable. With these works completed and the Canadian land lines nationalised, the whole distance from England to the shores of the Indian Ocean, say, at Perth, the capital of Western Australia, will be covered by a series of cables and land telegraphs under State control. Perth is near the 116th meridian east, while it is 244 degrees of longitude westerly from London. Reckoning by meridians of longitude, therefore, two-thirds of the globe will be girdled by a State-owned telegraph service so soon as the Pacific cable and Canadian lines associated therewith are established as national works.

The necessity for connecting India and other British possessions in Asia with the Imperial system of telegraphy must, however, be recognised. On reference to the papers appended it will be found that the Imperial scheme of cables to traverse the Indian and Atlantic Oceans between Perth and London embraces the following works, viz. :—

- (1.) Cable from Western Australia *via* Cocos Island and Mauritius to South Africa, with branches to India and Singapore—9,100 miles.
- (2.) Cable from South Africa *via* Ascension and Barbadoes to Bermuda, thence to Canada and the United Kingdom—6,600 miles.

These two sections together make 15,700 nautical miles, while the distance from London to Perth by the Canadian route is about the same, the actual distance being a few hundred miles less. Thus it will be seen that, taking into account branch cables to connect all the British possessions, half the whole work is already or will shortly be accomplished.

Since the projected Imperial postal cable service was formally submitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1898, certain telegraph companies have been permitted to lay private cables on the sections east and west of South Africa; it may, however, be assumed that in a matter which has been correctly described as of transcendent importance to the British people everywhere, care has been taken by those acting for the State to reserve the right to expropriate these cables whenever in the public interests they may be required.

The papers appended set forth the scheme in detail and furnish ample explanations on all essential points. These documents contain the matured judgment of Sir Sanford Fleming, a member of the Board, who has given more attention to the subject than any other man, and in whose views this Board entirely concurs. In one of these appendices it is pointed out that it was largely owing to the action and influence of the Chambers of Commerce of the United Kingdom that the postal telegraph service was introduced thirty years ago in the Mother country. Similarly we believe it to be in the power of the various bodies representing trade and commerce throughout the Empire to influence the universal adoption of the Imperial postal cable service. It is with that object in view that this appeal is made. We respectfully and earnestly invite the aid and co-operation of all such bodies in bringing to completion "the crowning development of the British Post Office."

In the name and by the authority of the Board of Trade of the capital of the Dominion of Canada, we ask all concerned in this Imperial movement to take such action as may tend most speedily to nationalise the telegraph system, by land and sea, of the whole Empire.

We have, &c.,

[SEAL.]

JOHN COATES, President.
CECIL BETHUNE, Secretary.

APPENDICES.

1. Post-Office Reforms in the Victorian Era, and the Development of an Imperial Cable Service. Read before the Royal Society of Canada, 22nd May, 1901.
2. A State-owned System of Electric Cables for the Empire. Letter to the Right Honourable Joseph Chamberlain, Colonial Secretary, 28th October, 1898.
3. State-owned Telegraphs for the Empire. Letter to the Right Honourable the Earl of Hopetoun, Governor-General of Australia, 3rd December, 1900.
4. A State-owned Telegraph Service girdling the Globe. Letter to the Hon. Wm. Mulock, Postmaster-General of Canada, 1st January, 1901.
5. Proposal to nationalise the Telegraph Service of the Empire. Letter to Lieut.-Colonel Denison, President of the British Empire League in Canada, 13th February, 1901.
6. A Pan-Britannic Cable Service. Resolution of the British Empire League in Canada at the Annual Meeting, 13th February, 1901.

NO. 1.—POST-OFFICE REFORMS IN THE VICTORIAN ERA, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN IMPERIAL CABLE SERVICE. (*Vide Empire Review* for July).

Read before the Royal Society of Canada, 22nd May, 1901, by Sir Sandford Fleming.

At an early date the postal service everywhere was of the most primitive character. The English record points out that at one time foot carriers were employed to convey the mails, and that they travelled at the rate of sixteen or eighteen miles a day. Frequently two months elapsed before any answer to a letter could be received in London from Scotland or Ireland.

Great Britain has taken a leading part in post-office reform. This fact is universally recognised. When our great and good Queen came to the throne the service was still deplorably unsatisfactory. It is now sixty-four years since a process of transformation commenced which has been marked by distinct stages of development, each stage opening a new chapter in the history of the post-office service. The last chapter, yet unwritten, may be regarded as having been opened on the closing day of the century, when the contract for establishing the Pacific cable was signed on behalf of the Home Government and the Governments of Canada, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and New Zealand.