

explanations I beg leave to append extracts from an article on "State Cables and Cheap Telegraphy as aids to Imperial Consolidation." In this article it is pointed out how Press messages may, within certain limitations, be transmitted without cost.

By this means the people of the whole Empire would be brought into continuous touch. Each person, on opening his daily newspaper, would look into the column or columns under the heading "Empire Cable News" for the Imperial intelligence of the day, and would there find a trustworthy record of the matters of most vital importance and interest to every British community.

No argument is needed to point out the advantages which would spring from such an agency. It is impossible to conceive any other means which would so speedily and so effectively enlighten the masses of British people on all matters which concern their common welfare. Even small portions of such Empire news regularly furnished daily in the newspapers would be a thousand times better than the almost entire absence of such intelligence which now generally obtains. It undoubtedly would have a powerful educative influence, and the high political effect would be to foster a broad Imperial patriotism. It would open to the intelligence of all our people within the circle of the "Empire cables" wider issues connected with the advancement and development of the Imperial fabric, and we are warranted in believing that it would stimulate the sense of common citizenship, and, in time, lead to reciprocal affinity eventually approaching a general unity of ideas.

The machinery of a fully equipped Intelligence Department once provided, we may then with confidence assume (in the words used by the Colonial Office and repeated by the Canadian Government in recent correspondence* that the better union and the collective prosperity of the British Empire "may be wisely left to develop in accordance with circumstances, and, as it were, of their own accord."

I share very fully with every one with whom I have conferred the opinion that satisfactory results must reasonably be expected to follow the establishment of a wisely arranged Intelligence Department. The Imperial Press service suggested would tell its story and perform its functions not once, not intermittently, but daily throughout every year. It would, like the continual dropping of water, produce effective results. By means of this perennial flow we may confidently hope to have the spirit and principles of the British Constitution in course of time pervading, invigorating, vivifying the whole Empire, and it is firmly believed that such results would be accomplished more speedily and more thoroughly in this way than by any other means whatever. It is this spirit and these principles, inherited from the centuries, which would beget that sympathy and affection which, although as light as the air we breathe, would constitute the cohesive forces to bind together the Empire under one flag and sovereign as with bonds of steel.

As a Business Proposition.

Looking at the establishment of the Empire cables as a business proposition, three questions arise:—

- (1.) What expenditure of capital will be required?
- (2.) Who shall bear the cost?
- (3.) What returns may be expected?

As to the first question: The initial section is already completed as a joint State undertaking. This cable extends under the Pacific Ocean from Bamfield on the west coast of Canada, to Doubtless Bay on the coast of New Zealand, and Southport on the eastern coast of Australia. The exact cost of this undertaking is known. We also know the cost of the best description of copper-wired land telegraphs with full equipment for rapid transmission over any distance. On the basis of these known data it is estimated that the very moderate expenditure of £5,000,000 would complete the globe-girdling chain of Empire cables, with connecting land-lines. This chain would include a nationalised line from London across the Atlantic to Canada, and through Canada to Bamfield on the Pacific; also the necessary land-lines through Australia and nationalised cables across the Indian Ocean to India and South Africa, including also State-owned cables from South Africa to England *via* Barbados and Bermuda.

The second question, "Who shall bear the cost?" is a matter for negotiation, and obviously must for the present remain undetermined. It may, however, be said that the cost should be borne by all the Governments concerned in proportions to be agreed upon. On this principle the Pacific cable was established; New Zealand, with the three Australian States, New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland, each agreed to bear two-eighteenthths of the cost, while the remaining ten-eighteenthths was divided between the United Kingdom and Canada in equal proportions. In the larger project, the whole Commonwealth of Australia, comprising six States, is interested. India is especially interested, the South African States are interested, and likewise the West Indies. The Dominion of Canada is interested, and still more so the Home Government, representing the United Kingdom, many Crown colonies, and, indeed, the whole Empire. In due time it will become the duty of statesmen representing these several interests to arrange who shall bear the cost and in what proportions.

The third question is already in part answered in the paper appended on "State Cables and Cheap Telegraphy as aids to Imperial Consolidation." It is there demonstrated that the Pacific cable, working only half-time—that is to say, twelve hours in each twenty-four—would at an extremely low charge for transmitting ordinary messages, yield a revenue considerably more than sufficient to cover all working-expenses. I am firm in the conviction that it would be precisely the same with the completed Empire cables, and that they would be at liberty during a number of hours every day in the year to transmit regularly the free Press messages desired to be exchanged by the Imperial Intelligence Department.

* Correspondence relating to the future organization of Colonial Conferences.—*The Times*, 8th December, 1905.