

XV.

From the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Quebec, Quebec :—

To my mind both an Imperial Council and an Imperial Intelligence Department are necessary and both will bring forth much good fruit; but, while I would like to see both as soon as possible, I quite agree with you that the helpfulness of the first cannot be nearly so certain or so great as it will be when there has been brought about the definite knowledge which can only arise out of the rapid and full establishment of the second.

It is simply deplorable the extent to which the telegraphic news that we receive in Canada is affected at times, and, with regard to certain subjects, by the necessity as it is at present of its going through the United States. This of itself demonstrates the strong need there is for an Imperial Intelligence Department, which can only be good and effective when we have just what you suggest—viz., an ample Empire cable system passing Imperial intelligence fully and freely throughout the Empire. Our great need, above all other needs, is just the system of full, free, and effective Empire cables, which you so pertinently and forcibly suggest.

XVI.

From the Reverend S. P. Rose, D.D., Centenary Methodist Church, Hamilton :—

It is impossible to feel otherwise than impressed with the grandeur (I can think of no more adequate term) of your proposition and of its bearing, not only upon Imperial unity, but upon the closer fellowship of the nations of the earth. It is hard to think of any other single material advantage within the reach of our age, out of which larger contributions to the closer fellowship of the civilised nations might be derived, than that which has your advocacy.

STATE CABLES AND CHEAP TELEGRAPHY, AIDS TO IMPERIAL CONSOLIDATION.

The Substance of an Address by Sir Sandford Fleming at a Meeting of the United Empire Club, London, 27th July, 1905; His Grace the Duke of Argyle in the Chair.

The British communities the world over are inevitably being drawn to the question of the consolidation of the Empire. Not a few of the foremost men of the day regard it as a high public duty to give expression to thoughts and opinions which may tend to promote that object. The humblest citizen is not debarred from doing the same. I would venture, therefore, to put forward a few explanations and suggestions in regard to the place and function of a system of Empire cables as a most important and necessary aid to the desired object of a closer union.

I offer these suggestions in the hope that they may be deemed not unworthy of consideration at the next Colonial Conference. Meanwhile there will be a distinct advantage in having the views submitted to the public for their general information and possible criticism.

First I would draw attention to the recent report of the Ottawa Board of Trade respecting Empire cables, a document which has an intimate bearing on the future usefulness of that unique State undertaking, the Pacific cable, established by the wise foresight of six British Governments. This report points out that there is a wonderful field of usefulness for the Pacific cable, and it furnishes direct evidence of the extraordinary unanimity evinced by British Chambers of Commerce in all parts of the globe on the subject. It demonstrates that there is a widespread desire to secure a comprehensive means of cheap telegraphy between all the great self-governing British States throughout the world in the interests of trade, shipping, social and commercial intercourse, and especially in the interest of Imperial affinity and union; it shows, further, that no argument has been advanced against the public policy of completing without loss of time the trunk line of telegraph-cables advocated, of which the Pacific cable constitutes the first great division, forming as it does, a large portion of the whole system of State-owned cables at present projected.

It is not suggested that the State should assume the control of ocean cables generally but simply that one line around the globe should be State-owned; that this line should be the one described by the Ottawa Board of Trade as "Empire cables," connecting as it would the several great outlying divisions of the Empire with each other, and all with the Mother-country.

It has been objected that prejudice to existing interests would be thereby created. To that stricture one may reply that, in so far as other cables intersect the line of the Empire cables, they would assume the position of branches, and would gain greatly by the connection. The true policy of the State should be to reduce progressively the charges for messages transmitted by the Empire cables to the lowest possible rates while still leaving the service self-supporting. Two results would follow this policy: an enormous increase in the volume of business, and a great reduction in telegraph charges to and from all points on the globe-girdling chain. Both results would necessarily benefit the private companies owning the branch lines, by reason of the continuous stream of profitable telegraph traffic which the Imperial trunk system would bring to the companies to handle.

Irrefutable evidence can be furnished to prove that with the globe-girdling chain of Empire cables established, it would be possible greatly to reduce the cost of all oversea telegraphy coming within the range or within the influence of these cables.

Returns recently laid before Parliament from the Pacific Cable Board furnish information respecting the working of this State undertaking. The actual working-expenses for the year ending 31st March, 1905—including salaries and expenses at the Head Office in London and at all the stations and termini, and including provision for a provident fund and the maintenance of a repair-ship—amount to less than £51,000, while the traffic receipts for the same year were over £82,000. The Pacific cable, therefore, already earns sufficient to cover all working-expenses, and