

It is as unnecessary to dwell upon, as it is impossible to exaggerate, the importance of this great undertaking, which I venture to believe will meet with your entire sympathy.

A submarine line of Telegraph, extending between India, China, and Australia, would give the British Government the practical control and command at all times of all the Telegraphic communications between the French, Dutch, and Spanish Settlements of the East, with the respective States to which they belong.

The promoters will feel greatly indebted if you will give the present application your early consideration, as the negotiations with the various Governments concerned cannot be matured until Her Majesty's Government have signified the extent of their co-operation.

Should that decision be favourable to the views of the promoters, they will register themselves as a Company, under "The Companies Act, 1862," in the expectation that the pending arrangement with the other Governments will then be brought to a speedy and successful termination, upon the attainment of which result they will be prepared to carry out co-temporaneously the various sections of the India-Australia Telegraph.

I have, &c.,

CHARLES NICHOLSON.

The Right Honorable W. E. Gladstone, M.P.,
Chancellor of the Exchequer.

MESSRS. FORDE AND FLEEMING JENKIN TO MR. F. GISBORNE.

6, Duke-street, Adelphi, London,

5th March, 1863.

DEAR SIR,—

We enclose you an Estimate of the first cost and maintenance expenses of the proposed Cable between Java and the South Eastern portion of the Gulf of Carpentaria.

You will see by the Specification that we recommend the adoption of a heavy and somewhat expensive Cable, small and cheap Cables have seldom proved permanently successful, and we think it bad policy to spare money on this part of the expenditure. The core will transmit, with the usual Morse instruments, from seven to eight words per minute between the proposed stations, the longest section being 590 knots.

With new improved instruments this number of words could be doubled.

The outer covering of heavy iron wires is suitable to the depth of water along the proposed route. These wires are, moreover, to be protected against corrosion by a hard bituminous outer coating.

We believe that the sum named as the cost of this Cable, free on board in England, will agree with the tenders to be obtained from first class makers by public competition.

Contractors have hitherto been generally employed for the transport and submerging of Cables, but we think that in a line like the present, where there is really no risk of failure, the large sums usually paid under this head can be saved; and we have framed the Estimates on the supposition that the Company will transport and lay the Cable by means of its own Officers.

A large saving will thus be effected, and the Company's Officers will have a thorough control over the execution of this portion of the work, which has hitherto frequently not been the case.

The proposed arrangement will also enable a large number of firms to tender for the outer covering.

We propose to use sailing vessels for the conveyance of the Cable in wrought iron water tight tanks, from England to its destination.

The adoption of this plan, without any sensible increase of risk or delay, still further diminishes the estimate below the sum which would be required if the Cable were to be carried (as formerly estimated) in steamers specially built or chartered for the purpose.

The proposed plan entails the purchase of one large and powerful steamer.

The total cost of each of the three sections between India, Rangoon, and Australia, if carried out at the same time and with the same Staff, but with an additional steamer, would be as follows, and the work could be completed in two and a half years.

Rangoon-Singapore	...	...	...	£450,000
Singapore-Batavia	...	...	...	170,000
Java-Gulf Carpentaria	...	...	...	725,000
			Total	£1,345,000

You will perceive that, while nothing has been spared to secure a strong and efficient Cable, the utmost possible economy has been studied in the plans for carrying out the work, and the Estimates are consequently very little higher than those laid by you before the Australian Legislatures, for a Cable of less than one third the weight of that now proposed.

The cost of working and maintenance may appear high, but we are convinced by experience that it is desirable to have a very ample staff of first class men for the superintendence of a submarine line, and that, moreover, it is desirable to use a very superior class of Telegraph clerks to those employed on land lines.