

dent line of telegraph removed from all Eastern complications. The projected line, extending from England through Canada to the Pacific Coast, in the Province of British Columbia, and thence across the Pacific to Asia and the Australian provinces, would supply an independent line of communication so much desired, and in so doing would indirectly—but, it is held, very materially—strengthen the military and naval power of Great Britain, while it would directly promote the highest interests of every one of the great colonial possessions.

Within the present year an overland line of telegraph will be completed along the route of the Canadian Pacific Railway, thus spanning the American continent, and there are a number of electric cables in operation across the Atlantic from England to Canada. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company have expressed a desire to facilitate the despatch of through telegraphic business along their line in every possible way, and are prepared to enter into a permanent agreement which, with the competition existing on Atlantic lines, will secure exceedingly low tariff rates between England and the coast of British Columbia. There only remains to be established the submarine telegraph across the Pacific Ocean.

When the accompanying memorandum was issued it was thought that the Pacific cable should follow a northern route by the Aleutian Islands and Japan. It was generally believed that in the great central area of the Pacific Ocean subaqueous rocky ledges and coral reefs prevailed to such an extent as to render the establishment and maintenance of an electric cable practically impossible. That opinion was based on an imperfect knowledge of the physical character of the Pacific Ocean, and on the charts which at one time were strewn with islands, reefs, and shoals, many of which were inserted on doubtful authority, and have consequently been omitted from the latest publications. Since then, also, it may be supposed that submarine telegraphy is better understood. Be that as it may, the view is now entertained that it may not be absolutely necessary to follow a northern route, and that the successful establishment of an electric cable running directly from British Columbia to the Australian provinces may be quite within the range of practicability.

There are, indeed, extensive coral reefs in the central and southern Pacific; but the most authentic hydrographic information establishes that those reefs are generally in great groups, separated by wide and deep depressions free from obstructions. It is further revealed by the latest bathymetric data that those depressions or troughs present (as far as ascertained) a sea floor precisely similar to that of the Atlantic, so suitable for submarine telegraphy. Those ocean depressions, alike by their geographical position and their continuity, open up the prospect of connecting Canada and Australia by a direct cable. The course of the cable would be from Vancouver to the Fiji Islands, touching at the Sandwich Islands and Fanning Island as mid-stations. From the Fiji Islands a cable connection would be formed with the existing Australian and New Zealand telegraph systems.

Whatever route be followed by the cable across the Pacific, the object will be to bring the group of Australian Colonies into direct telegraph connection with Canada, and secure a means of communication between them and England independent of all lines passing through or in proximity to Europe. Messages will be conveyed by the new line at lower rates than are now exacted, and the immediate effect which must follow its establishment is manifest. The cost of telegraphing between Australia and England will be reduced, intercourse will be facilitated between the sister colonies and Canada, and an impulse given to commercial activity.

Apart altogether from the political advantages of the new independent telegraphic connection, the gain to the general commerce of the colonies which it would serve would justify them in co-operating with Canada in promoting the undertaking.

The undertaking may be promoted by the several Governments agreeing to give for a term of years a subsidy sufficient to induce a company to embark in it. The subsidy may be a fixed sum, contributed in equitable proportions, or it may be dependent on the business transacted by each respective colony, and on the reduction in rates which would follow immediately on the line going into operation.

It is quite obvious that the gross foreign telegraph business of any one colony, reckoned at the difference between the present high rates and the reduced charges, would produce a considerable aggregate sum. That sum might be taken to represent the year's savings accruing to the colony from the establishment of the new line of telegraph, and it would obviously well repay that colony to share the amount so saved with the Telegraph Company. Suppose the accrued saving so reckoned in any one year to be £50,000, a moiety to the company as a subsidy would be £25,000, while the colony itself would gain a direct pecuniary benefit from the undertaking to a like extent. The illustration as presented will explain the principle on which a subsidy may be based.

Among the British possessions in the southern hemisphere directly interested in the work are Fiji, Tasmania, New Zealand, Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia, and Victoria. I venture to think that their co-operation with Canada in the manner set forth would, without difficulty and with no great delay, secure to them and to the whole British colonial system all the political and commercial advantages to result from the projected line of communication.

As the contemplated work is of special importance to the Mother-country and all her colonies, I trust I may be allowed to entertain the hope that you will be pleased to bring the subject under the notice of the respective Governments.

The Right Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald.

I have, &c.,

SANDFORD FLEMING.

*Telegraph between Australasia, Canada, and Great Britain.*

SIR,—

London, 19th July, 1886.

The undersigned, who were present at the meeting of the Agents-General on the 12th instant, having been requested by you to ascertain the amount of subsidy which would be necessary