

“The undersigned, therefore, on behalf of the Governments they represent, respectfully request that Her Majesty’s Government will cause such survey to be made.”

This letter was signed by the following gentlemen, comprising all the delegates to the Conference then in London:—

For Canada—	For Western Australia—
Sir Alexander Campbell.	Sir John Forrest.
Mr Sandford Fleming.	Mr Septimus Butt.
For Victoria—	For New Zealand—
Mr James Service.	Sir William Fitzherbert.
Mr. Alfred Deakin.	Sir Francis D. Bell.
Sir James Lorimer	For Tasmania—
Sir Graham Berry.	Mr J S. Dodds.
For New South Wales—	Mr. Abye Douglas.
Sir Patrick Jennings.	For Newfoundland—
Sir Robert Wisdom.	Sir Ambrose Shea.
Sir Saul Samuel.	Sir Robert Thorburn.
For Queensland—	For Natal—
Sir Samuel Griffith.	Sir John Robinson.
Sir James Garrick.	For Cape of Good Hope—
	Sir Charles Mills.

The Colonial Minister caused the above letter to be transmitted to the Admiralty on the 23rd May. The Admiralty replied as follows:—

“SIR,—

“Admiralty, 28th May, 1887

“I have laid before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty your letter of the 23rd instant, enclosing a recommendation, signed by the delegates to the late Colonial Conference, that a survey should be made with a view to determining the practicability of laying a cable between Canada and Australia, and further suggesting that Mr. Fleming should be placed in communication with the Hydrographer to the Admiralty with a view to discussing the question.

“2. In reply, their Lordships desire me to state, for the information of Sir Henry Holland, that, if Mr. Fleming has not already left London, he will find the Hydrographer at the Admiralty on any day he may like to fix.

“3. My Lords, however, desire me to add that, unless the Secretary of State has reason to believe that a submarine cable is likely to be laid from Vancouver to Australia very shortly, their Lordships would not propose to despatch a surveying vessel for the sole purpose of obtaining soundings over the route, but that they will endeavour to arrange that soundings shall be gradually obtained during the next few years in the ordinary course of hydrographic surveys.

“The Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office.”

“I am, &c.,

“EVAN MACGREGOR.

The writer of the following letter having been furnished with copies of the letters from the Colonial Office and the Admiralty, addressed the Colonial Minister as follows:—

“SIR,—

“London, 5th June, 1887

“I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 3rd instant, enclosing copies of letters between the Colonial Office and the Admiralty respecting the proposed nautical survey of the Pacific in connection with the laying of a cable between Canada and Australia.

“I beg leave to direct attention to the third paragraph of the letter from the Admiralty, which reads as follows: ‘My Lords, however, desire me to add that, unless the Secretary of State has reason to believe that a submarine cable is likely to be laid from Vancouver to Australia very shortly, their Lordships would not propose to despatch a surveying vessel for the sole purpose of obtaining soundings over the route, but that they will endeavour to arrange that soundings shall be gradually obtained during the next few years in the ordinary course of hydrographic surveys. Since the receipt of your letter of the 3rd instant I have, with the permission of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, placed myself in communication with the Hydrographer, who has explained to me what is to be understood by the last part of the above-quoted paragraph. From these explanations I have learned that it is not intended to do anything until next year, that next year it is expected that a surveying vessel will be despatched to Australian waters for other purposes, and that while there the officers will be instructed, in the ordinary course of their duties, to endeavour to obtain some information which may be useful in connection with the question of laying a cable. It is intended to follow the same course year by year, but, from all I can learn, no definite idea can be formed as to the time which will be expended before the work will be completed, indeed, it does not appear quite certain that anything will be done even next year—it is hinted that the work may be interrupted and the surveying vessel taken away. It is scarcely necessary for me to point out that the course proposed to be followed will not accomplish the desired end. The records of the Conference will show how much importance is attached by every delegate to the telegraphic connection of Canada and Australia. In an Imperial point of view its importance was held at the Conference to be second to no other question brought forward for discussion, and I think I may venture to say, on behalf of the twenty-one delegates who attached their names to the letter of the 16th May, addressed to Sir Henry Holland, that it will be a grave disappointment to them and to the Governments they represent if no other course than that proposed and explained to me by the Hydrographer be followed. Sir Henry Holland, who presided over the Conference, will remember how strongly individual members spoke on the subject, and he knows also the view of the Conference as a body. On the last day of the Conference a resolution on the question was unanimously adopted, to which I think it would be well to direct the special attention of the Admiralty