

What course should then be followed?—It has always been recognised that the owners of the private cables are entitled to reasonable consideration. Thirty years ago their enterprise in laying the pioneer cables to Australia was commendable. They received generous Government assistance for many years. They exacted and obtained rich returns from the public. The venture has proved a profitable one, and as they have been gathering a yearly harvest it is scarcely surprising that they are unwilling to relinquish the monopoly they have long held. I have said they are entitled to due consideration, but the well-being of the British people generally must be considered. If it has become a matter of public expediency that the circle of Empire cables should be completed, the companies cannot for ever stand in the way. They have long been hostile. Shall they continue antagonistic to the public interests and refuse to recognise the public needs? The remedy is simple; it is found in the inherent right possessed by the State to subordinate private to public interests and exercise the powers of "eminent domain." By this well-known legal principle the private cables necessary to complete the system of Empire cables, such as that recently laid from South Africa to Western Australia, may be expropriated, just compensation being paid to the present owners. Owing to the attitude assumed by the companies this is, perhaps, the best course open, although it is not the only course: the alternative is to lay a new cable parallel to the existing private cable for the use of the State and for the public advantage.

In submitting these explanations to the Ottawa Board of Trade, by request of the President, I may be allowed to express my gratification that the subject of Empire cables is now being considered by business-men, and that at the Congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the Empire in Montreal those present were a unit in respect to it. On this point I cannot do better than refer to the resolution adopted (appended). We all know what business-men can do. Their intuitive perception leads them to see clearly. Their business habits and training induce them to deal with a subject in a businesslike way, and in consequence the action taken by organized bodies of commercial men has more weight and commands more influence than that of any other class. It will be remembered that it was the Chamber of Commerce of the United Kingdom which commenced and successfully completed the movement for nationalising the telegraph system of the Mother-country. And quite recently the Ottawa Board learned from Mr. Thomas Barclay, of Paris, how the way was paved for the treaty of arbitration between France and Great Britain. That gentleman, in his address to the Board, explained that it was in a very large measure owing to the co-operation of the great mass of the *Chambres de Commerce de France* and the Chambers of Commerce of England, Ireland, and Scotland that the treaty was made possible and the ground cleared for the heads of these two great European Powers concluding an international agreement promotive of the peace of the world.

So likewise in the present movement, if associations of business-men in any portion of the Empire follow the example of the Montreal Congress and give expression to their views, it will have a powerful influence on the respective Governments. Co-operation of this character cannot fail to be effective; it will certainly tend to produce a community of sympathy in a matter which concerns the British people in all quarters of the globe.

*Appendix B.—Resolution adopted by the Fifth Congress of the Chamber of Commerce of the Empire, held in Montreal, Canada, in August, 1903.*

That in the opinion of this Congress all the self-governing British communities around the globe should be united by a continuous chain of State-owned telegraphs. That such an inter-Imperial line of communication would, under Government control, put an end to the difficulty which has been caused in Australia by the allied cable companies, and remove all friction which has arisen between the partners in the Pacific cable; that it would lower charges to a minimum on oversea messages passing between New Zealand, Australia, India, South Africa, the West Indies, Newfoundland, Canada, and the Mother-country; that it would provide a double means of communication at low uniform rates between the Mother-country, or any one British State, and all self-governing British States; that it would constitute the most effective means by which the several governmental units of the Empire may hold communion with each other whenever they desire, and that while it would be of the highest importance to the commercial and social interests of the British people around the world, it would, by the subtle force of electricity, at once promote the consolidation of the Empire and prove an indispensable factor in Imperial unity.

*Appendix C.—Minute adopted by the British Empire League in Canada, at the Annual Meeting held in Ottawa on the 16th February, 1904.*

1. This League has, from the first, strongly favoured the Empire-cable scheme, a scheme which has been designed to promote, in a direct and practical manner, the primary object of the League as expressed in the constitution—that is to say, the permanent unity of the Empire.

2. By the "Empire cables" is understood a continuous chain of cable telegraphs around the globe, touching only British possessions, and connecting Newfoundland, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, India, South Africa, and the West Indies directly with each other and with the Mother-country.

3. The great heart of the Empire is in the United Kingdom, and the League recognises that by means of the Empire cables every throb may instantly be felt in each self-governing British community the world over.

4. The Empire cables would actually be the great nerves of the Empire, and this League firmly holds the opinion that whatever else may remain the property of private companies or trusts, the Empire alone should own its own nervous system.

5. Fully one-fifth of the estimated population of the world is British, and while the British islands on the margin of Europe cover a very small part, the Empire embraces nearly one-fifth of the globe's total land-surface. If we take the superficial area of the United Kingdom as a