

Minto, of Canada, two cablegrams girdling the globe. One, going easterly, occupied 625 minutes; the other, going westerly, took 810 minutes.

The New York "Tribune" congratulates Great Britain on the magnificent achievement in the completion of the cable, which is an incentive to America.

The first cable across the Pacific line was from the steamer Angila to the King.

Sir Joseph Ward states that the Pacific cable will be open for traffic in a few weeks. The staffing of the different stations will contribute to a slight delay. The cable has been put down by the contractors a month ahead of contract time. The rates to Canada and the United States, plus terminal charges, will probably be as follows:—Commercial messages, 2/ a word; Government, 1/4; press, 8d.

Lord Tennyson, the Acting-Governor-General, has received a cable from the King, in which His Majesty says he rejoices to think that the people of this country and those beyond the seas were strengthened by another bond. The original message to the King reached him via the western route in one hour five minutes, while a message by the East took an hour and twenty-six minutes. The Eastern Extension Company explains that it took an hour and twelve minutes to get the message from Suva to Adelaide, and that it took only fourteen minutes between Adelaide and London.

The Pacific Cable Board will charge 3/ a word for ordinary messages, 2/ for Government messages, and 1/ for press to both Australia and New Zealand. The Eastern Extension Company is likely to lower the New Zealand rates.

The Postmaster-General has received no official intimation regarding the Pacific cable rates. The Federal Government has no desire to charge less than the Eastern Extension Company, and therefore inaugurate a cut-throat competition.

The following cable message has been received by the Premier from Sir John See, Premier of New South Wales, acknowledging congratulations on the completion of the Pacific cable:—"Join with you that the best interests of the Commonwealth, the colonies, and the Mother Country have been greatly augmented by the all-red line, which will promote strong kinship throughout the Empire."

THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE.

The minute by Sir John Forrest (Federal Defence Minister) on the Imperial Conference has been published.

He thinks we must accept Admiral Beaumont's opinion that it is beyond the power of the Commonwealth at the outset to create a force adequate to the naval defence of Australia. To provide even the small squadron proposed by Admiral Beaumont would cost £3,600,000 as follows:—Two first-class cruisers, £1,000,000; six second-class cruisers, £2,500,000; depots, stores and naval needs, £100,000. Under existing conditions he does not recommend the establishment of an Australian navy. He fears it would not be very efficient, for besides the enormous cost of replacing the fleet from time to time with more modern ships, there would be no change of officers, and crews, who would go on year after year in the same ships subject to the same influence and with deteriorating effect. He advises that Australia should not get the idea that it has different interests from those of the rest of the Empire. There is only one sea to be supreme over, and we want one fleet to be mistress over that sea.

Sir John Forrest speaks of the desirability of having one fleet maintained by the whole nation, every port contributing to its support, on a plan to be mutually arranged, not necessarily on a uniform basis of construction. Arising out of this would be the consequent necessity for the over-sea dominions of the Empire to be adequately represented at the Admiralty. He feels this could be arranged on a mutually satisfactory basis. In time of war there could not be any division of responsibility, and until a more extended federation of the Empire is established that responsibility would have to rest on the Imperial Government.

He urges that greater facilities should be granted for locally-trained boys entering the navy, and also making it easier for officers to enter the navy.

He suggests a conference in London of representatives of the colonies to discuss the strengthening of the naval defence of the Empire.

Sir E. Barton has communicated to the press the full text of the resolutions at the Imperial Conference.

BRITISH SHIPBUILDING.

The contracts for the construction of four steamers have been welcomed on Teeside, where 4000 shipbuilders are idle.

A number of the Morgan combine cargo steamers are being transformed into passenger vessels at Belfast.

The Atlantic Transport Company have ordered three steamers of 12,000 tons from Harland and Wolff's.

The Admiralty has notified shipbuilders that it will in future enforce penalties for late delivery of third-class cruisers.

Mr. Arnold-Forster, Secretary to the Admiralty, has stated that as far as naval requirements are concerned the Admiralty must approve of the designs of new Cunard ships.

The Admiralty tenders cabled on October 21 are for a 13,000-ton first-class cruiser, with a speed of 22 knots, the guns to be within a citadel instead of casements. There are to be several 9.5 guns. The cruiser squadron is gradually being strengthened, and will include the Drake, King Alfred and Good Hope, two of the Brilliant class and three of the County type.

AMERICAN ELECTIONS.

The American elections are being conducted quietly. Congress at the beginning of March will consist of 359 members. Governor Oden has been re-elected for New York.

One hundred and ninety-six Republicans and 176 Democrats have been elected. The Republicans carried Massachusetts, Connecticut, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Kansas, Wisconsin, and Illinois; and the Democrats Alabama, Florida, South and North Carolina, Arkansas, and Mississippi.

The Republicans carried Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Washington, Utah, Wyoming, Montana, and the majority of the New Jersey and Maryland seats. The Democrats carried Virginia, Georgia, Louisiana, Missouri, Texas and Colorado. New York City gave the heaviest Democratic vote on record owing to the revival of the Tammany party.

THE KAISER'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

The Kaiser has arrived at Kiel, en route to England.

The Kaiser has sailed from Kiel by the Hohenzollern for England.

A number of British torpedo destroyers escorted the German Emperor on board his yacht, the Hohenzollern, to Sheerness, the battleships in harbour firing a salute.

At ten in the forenoon the Kaiser was entertained at Shorecliffe, where Lord Roberts received him.

The Kaiser was wearing the uniform of the First Royal Dragoons, of which he is honorary colonel, and riding the white charger which he used at Queen Victoria's funeral.

He reviewed the troops in pelting rain and a gale of wind. Addressing the Dragoons, he made sympathetic reference to the late Queen, and called for cheers for the King.

After luncheon with the officers of the regiment, the Kaiser proceeded to Sandringham, via London.

The public were excluded from the stations en route.

The King met the Kaiser at Wofferton, shaking hands and saluting the Kaiser's cheek.

Extraordinary precautions were taken at all the junction stations, which were cleared half-an-hour before the train passed, and were closely watched by detectives.

The English newspapers are friendly towards the Kaiser, but are reserved towards Germany.

The "Times" says it is impossible to forget Germany's commission of animosity and scurrility which the Government did not attempt to check. It is imperative that Britain should

pursue a vigilant national policy, keeping a wary eye on Germany, who unflinchingly pressed advantages in regions where British interests predominated.

SOMALILAND.

Commandant Viljoen has enquired of Lord Roberts whether the Boers might offer their services for the Somaliland expedition, adding that if acceptable he might also proffer his services.

Colonel Swayne has arrived at Aden and is temporarily advising the Foreign Office on the condition of Somaliland. Colonel Manning has arrived at Berbera and has assumed the supreme command.

The advance has been deferred awaiting the African protectorate troops. The force available on the 27th inst. will be 3000. A larger force is discountenanced. Details of artillery and special service officers from Berbera are advancing immediately from the base between Berbera and Illig.

Colonel Manning dispenses with Indians as far as possible, except for holding the line of communication, owing to the difficulties of transport and climate and the necessary camp followers. Preference will be given to the protectorate regiments.

The general advance will be begun about the middle of December, when Colonel Swayne will have returned to his post. The season is now favourable for an advance. The Mulah, it is expected, will no doubt utilise his opportunities to carry on a boastful propaganda.

Uneasiness is felt at Aden at an unconfirmed report that he has raided an advanced outpost near Cahoteh, capturing an important camel transport.

Colonel Royston, of Durban, offers the services of 500 Natalians for Somaliland on the same terms as the irregulars in the Boer war.

The War Office has cabled to Lord Milner regretting its inability to accept a Boer contingent for the Somaliland expedition.

Colonel Swayne is ill and has sailed from Aden for England.

The Mulah, with 2000 riflemen, a Maxim and 15,000 spearmen, with reserve supplies of camels and sheep, is a few miles from Bohoteh, in Somaliland. The British garrison, numbering 500, with two guns and two Maxims, is entrenched in a stone fort.

Colonel Manning disbands the trek Somali levies, retaining a few picked mounteds. He recommends that three months' independent reserve supplies are necessary; also that wells and goods depots should be established, and that transport reserves are required to protect the lines of communication.

Somali spies report that a large caravan of rifles, under a European, are traversing the Welbe country to join the Mulah.

The decision not to employ Boers in the Somaliland expedition has caused great disappointment in Johannesburg.

THE HOME RULE BRIGADE.

Mr William Redmond, M.P. for Clare, has been sentenced to six months' imprisonment in Kilmalham Gaol for intimidation.

The Irish Independent Nationalists declare that the policy of obstruction has failed to redress a single wrong, while abstention from the Education Bill debate has inflicted an immense injury on Catholic interests, enabling the secularists to wring concessions from Mr Balfour.

Mr Denis Kilbride, ex-M.P., has been sentenced to imprisonment for four months at Mountjoy for intimidation in Tipperary.

CHINA.

As the result of the British Ambassador's demand, an edict has been issued ordering the beheading of the military officials who refused protection to Messrs. Bruce and Lewis (the missionaries who were murdered by a mob), the permanent disqualification of other officials, including a prefect, and the banishment of a number of subordinates.

The "Times" correspondent in Peking (Dr. Morrison) states that promotion of a fourth-grade official to the rank of mandarin of the first

grade has been gazetted. The advancement is due to official smuggling, in defiance of the protocol, of Mausers, rifles and cartridges into Kwangsi, and placing them at the disposal of the Governor, against the prohibition of the importation of arms, and the material used in their manufacture. The majority of the arsenals are manufacturing at high pressure.

The "Morning Post" says that owing to Great Britain's objection to the limitation of China's sovereignty, Germany has abandoned her demands, and China will not accord special economic or political privileges in the Yang-tse Valley to any foreign Power.

LORD ROSEBERRY.

Lord Rosebery, addressing a gathering of 3500 people at Edinburgh under the auspices of the East Scotland Liberal League, referring to the idea of a conference of Liberal leaders to consider a common plan of campaign against the Government, warned the party of the necessity of showing some sense of their Imperial responsibilities. He acknowledged that generous terms had been granted to the Boers, and added that as Great Britain must govern the Boers, he would not be scrupulous about the cost, if, as a matter of high policy, more money were granted for the restoration of farms and dwellings damaged by the ravages of war.

Mr Chamberlain's visit to South Africa, he said, was an exemplification of the Liberal League's doctrine, but he doubted whether, as there was a man of strong will and ability already in South Africa, the advent of another similarly constituted would conduce to harmony.

The speaker reiterated his previous views as to the Liberals and Ireland, and ridiculed the resumption of the Newcastle programme.

He complained of the War Office, and said that in the absence of determined efforts at efficiency he would have retained Lord Kitchener for the Secretaryship of War.

He condemned the Education Bill, and suggested a compromise on the basis of the Scottish system.

The "Times," in commenting on the speech, complains that it is small, cavilling, and specious.

The "Daily News" says Lord Rosebery is coming into line with the rest of the Liberal party.

THE DOUKHOBORS.

Mounted police follow the Doukhobors. Many of the fanatics have dropped exhausted, and asked to be carried in litters with their co-religionists, fearing to miss Christ's second coming.

The Manitoba officials are entraining the Doukhobor women and children and sending them back to their villages.

The Doukhobors, during a snow-storm at Foxwarren, slept in a grove of alder bushes. Their sufferings were terrible, their only covering being cotton clothes. Many contracted pneumonia. Their food consisted of wild berries and raw wheat. They fought for food given by the wayside, and continued their march to Winnipeg, refusing to listen to arguments and advice.

SERIOUS POISONING.

A serious wholesale poisoning affair which has occurred has caused much sensation in Melbourne. The sufferers were the children who took part in a United Primitive Methodist Sunday school picnic. A party of about 500 children from the Sunday schools left Williamstown for a picnic spot on the Werribee River.

Just after luncheon many of the children began to drop down sick, rapidly manifesting symptoms of ptomaine poisoning, till over one hundred sufferers were lying on the ground in great pain. Medical help was sent for and the farmers in the neighbourhood gave valuable assistance and provided conveyances to take the children to the railway station. On the arrival of the doctor the free use of the stomach pump relieved the worst cases. A special train conveyed the patients to the Williamstown Hospital. There were twenty-five in great danger for a time, but all have now recovered.