

*Route No. 3.*—From Vancouver to Bowen (Queensland), with mid-stations at Necker Island and Onoatoa (Gilbert Group), branching at Onoatoa, *via* Fiji, to New Zealand, and *via* San Christoval (Solomon Group) to Bowen—complete, in each case including maintenance for three years No. 4, The India Rubber, Gutta Percha, and Telegraph Works Company, £1,403,000; No. 3, The W T Henley's Telegraph Works Company, £1,723,000, No. 1, Siemens Brothers and Co., £2,240,000, No. 2, The Fowler-Waring Cable Company, £2,341,000.

*Route No. 4.*—From Vancouver Island to Bowen (Queensland) direct, with mid-stations at Necker Island, Apamana (Gilbert Group), and San Christoval (Solomon Group)—complete, including maintenance for three years, in each case No. 4, The India Rubber, Gutta Percha, and Telegraph Works Company, £1,068,000, No. 3, The W T Henley's Telegraph Works Company, £1,554,000, No. 1, Siemens Brothers and Co., £1,710,000, No. 2, The Fowler-Waring Cable Company £2,125,000.

*Route No. 5.*—Vancouver Island direct to New Zealand *via* Necker Island and the Fiji Group—complete, including maintenance for three years, in each case No. 4, The India Rubber, Gutta Percha, and Telegraph Works Company, £1,291,000, No. 3, W T Henley's Telegraph Works Company, £1,658,000, No. 2, The Fowler-Waring Cable Company, £2,010,000, No. 1, Siemens Brothers and Co., £2,050,000.

*Route No. 6.*—Vancouver Island to Norfolk Island, with mid-stations at Honolulu and Fiji. At Norfolk Island, branches to extend to New Zealand and Australia proper—complete, and including maintenance for three years, in each case No. 4, The India Rubber, Gutta Percha, and Telegraph Works Company, £1,391,000, No. 3, The W T Henley's Telegraph Works Company, £1,740,000, No. 1, Siemens Brothers and Co., £2,120,000, No. 2, The Fowler-Waring Cable Company, £2,130,000.

*Route No. 7.*—From Vancouver Island to Bowen (Queensland), with mid-stations at Honolulu, Onoatoa (Gilbert Group), and San Christoval (Solomon Group)—complete, including maintenance for three years, in each case No. 4, The India Rubber, Gutta Percha and Telegraph Works Company, £1,081,000, No. 3, The W T Henley's Telegraph Works Company, £1,589,000, No. 2, The Fowler-Waring Cable Company, £1,880,000, No. 1, The Siemens Brothers Company, £1,900,000.

*Route No. 8.*—From Vancouver Island direct to New Zealand, with mid-stations at Honolulu and Fiji—complete, including maintenance for three years, in each case No. 4, The India Rubber, Gutta Percha, and Telegraph Works Company, £1,243,000, No. 3, The W T Henley's Telegraph Works Company, £1,655,000, No. 2, The Fowler-Waring Cable Company, £1,910,000, No. 1, The Siemens Brothers Company, £1,970,000.

The cost of maintenance is variously estimated by the several firms, the highest being that of the W T Henley's Telegraph Works Company, who place the cost at £115,000 per annum, or £345,000 for the three years. This is subject to a reduction if the spare cable provided for the purpose be not used. The Siemens Brothers Company include in their offer for the purpose of maintenance £270,000, being at the rate of £90,000 per year this also is subject to a reduction if the actual repairs cost less than the sum named. This mode of charging for the maintenance and repair of the cable has an obvious advantage. The Fowler-Waring Company stipulate that a fixed sum—£300,000—be allowed to guarantee maintenance and repair for the three years. The India Rubber, Gutta Percha, and Telegraph Works Company make no special charge for guaranteeing the maintenance and repairs, and, as their offer for laying the cable on each one of the eight routes is the lowest, it is well to make this point perfectly clear by quoting from their proposal as follows "The contract prices given hereunder for the different routes include the erection at each cable-landing place of a suitable dwelling-house and operating-room for the working staff, with duplicate sets of all proper instruments at each station, also the use of two steamships fitted with cable-tanks and all necessary machinery for repairing the cable, and the cost of maintaining these ships, as well as the cables themselves, for three years." The contract prices for which this firm is prepared to manufacture, lay and maintain the cable for three years on any one of the eight routes are as follow:—

	£
Route No. 1	1,517,000
Route No. 2	1,416,000
Route No. 3 ..	1,303,000
Route No. 4	1,068,000
Route No. 5	1,291,000
Route No. 6	1,391,000
Route No. 7	1,081,000
Route No. 8	1,243,000

This company states that if intrusted with the contract they will undertake to manufacture the cable at the rate of twenty miles a day, and will proceed to ship and lay it with the least possible delay

An examination of this tender and accompanying documents shows that this Company propose to use an approved type of cable, the core on the long section (Route No. 1) is to have a copper conductor weighing 533lb per knot, insulated with gutta percha weighing 365lb. per knot, the sheathing to be the same as the deep-sea type of cable adopted by the Anglo-American Telegraph Company in the newest Trans-Atlantic Cable laid this year the shore-ends and intermediate cables to be similar in character and weight to those generally adopted under like circumstances. There is one apparent omission in this tender in connection with shore-end and shallow-water cables. I can find no special mention of a metallic protection against teredos. In the opinion of the undersigned, the core of the cable should be enveloped in a brass tape. The additional cost is not great, and before any contract is entered into