

APPENDIX A.

PAPERS LAID BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON THE PROPOSED PACIFIC CABLE.

No. 1.

The Hon. AUDLEY COOTE, Sydney, to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington.
Waverley Park, Sydney, — May, 1898.

Re *Pacific Cable*.

DEAR SIR,—

I have the honour to bring under your notice an article which appeared in the *Electrical Review* on the 4th and 18th March of this year under the title "The Empire and Telegraph-cables." I enclose herewith a reprint of the article, which will, I feel sure, be of special interest to you just now, when the British Government has under consideration the proposal from the Premiers of Australia in respect of the Pacific cable.

It is my intention to hand the article as well to the Australian Press, as their interests, although of less Imperial importance than those of the Governments of Australasia and Canada, must also be furthered by the carrying-out of the project which I have so long advocated—viz., the completion of the link still wanting in the chain of telegraph-cables encircling the globe, and the connection on that link of the colonies of Australasia and the great islands of the Pacific Ocean.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Wellington, New Zealand.

AUDLEY COOTE.

Enclosure in No. 1.

THE EMPIRE AND TELEGRAPH-CABLES.

[Reprinted from *The Electrical Review*.]

In the varying accounts of a new and important scheme of telegraph-cables which have lately been widely circulated among the Press throughout the colonies as well as in England there is to be found sufficient internal evidence to warrant us in concluding that all of these emanate from a single source. Although differing somewhat in the manner in which the statements are presented, as well as in the style of treatment, still, in the main body of these paragraphs and articles the recurrence of the same prejudiced and garbled statements all point to a common source of origin. We have frequently dealt in detail with the numerous points raised, but, as the subject has assumed a more interesting aspect lately, owing to the aggregation of errors which are now being so widely disseminated, it is, perhaps, well that the more important of these should again be treated of at the present time.

The subject of a system of submarine cables, which, starting from England, would be carried on to Cape Town, touching only at the various British possessions on the way, is not a new one, nor is the proposed continuation of such a line from Natal to Australia, *via* Mauritius, Rodriguez Island, and the Keelings, a new conception. A somewhat similar scheme was fully dealt with by Mr. Hofmeyr when representing the Cape of Good Hope at the Imperial and Colonial Conference held in London in 1887, and was recommended by him as an addition to the scheme for a cable across the Pacific Ocean from Canada to Australasia, which was one of the principal subjects before the Conference. This additional scheme, which, as a supplement to the Pacific cable, it may be remembered, was rendered necessary by the inefficiency of, and frequent interruptions to, the then existing system of cables, has lately assumed an importance which ten years ago it did not possess.

About the time of the first Colonial Conference it was the cables to Australia which were continually breaking down, but latterly the cables to the Cape have deprived them of the record for frequency of interruption, and therefore the supplementary scheme referred to by Mr. Hofmeyr is strongly advocated by the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company, the Eastern Telegraph Company, and its offshoot the Eastern and South African Telegraph Company, the latter of which suffers both in purse and reputation owing to the frequency of interruptions to the Cape cables.

The point to which we take most serious objection is that the popular advocates of Mr. Hofmeyr's project hope to advantage their cause by a continuance of the system of inaccuracy in figures and statements advanced, and by so doing to prejudice opinion against the Pacific cable route. For example, it used to be roundly asserted that the depth through which a Pacific cable would have to pass was "estimated at 12,000 fathoms (or fourteen miles) in some places." This assertion was contained in a note from the Postmaster-General of South Australia to his Government, and, coming from such a source, aroused a natural objection on their part to examine any further into the matter, more especially when the same authority further asserts, in the same note, with a courageous confidence worthy of a better cause, that "as the Government are aware, I have given this subject very great and careful consideration—more so, perhaps, than any one else." We