

feeling on this point in part found expression in the Canadian Senate, on the 8th April last, in a discussion in which the Hon. David Mills, Minister of Justice, the Hon. R. W. Scott, Secretary of State, and the Hon. Sir Mackenzie Bowell took part. Wherever the responsibility may rest, the fact remains that the Pacific cable has been long delayed and, when laid, its cost will be greatly enhanced; without any corresponding increase in efficiency.

There are many circumstances that have given rise to the prevailing impression that the Home authorities have unduly favoured the monopoly in its opposition to Canada and the Australian Colonies. Among these may be mentioned the circumstances connected with the nautical survey, as they are given in the report of his mission to Australia by the Minister of Trade and Commerce. (See report laid before Canadian Parliament, 1894. p. 106.) [Enclosure 1 in No. 4. F.-5, 1894.] The facts in brief are these:—

“From the first a Pacific cable had been declared to be impracticable by the Eastern Extension Company, owing, as alleged by them, to insuperable physical difficulties existing on the route. To remove all doubts, it was deemed expedient to obtain an exact survey, and in order to invest the project with public confidence it was important to have an examination made by the highest nautical authority. The Admiralty was appealed to, and for several years the matter was urged upon the Home Government, Canada offering to contribute half the cost. But no result followed. At the Colonial Conference of 1887 the matter was discussed, and a resolution unanimously passed requesting that the survey be at once undertaken. Correspondence followed, in which the Australasian Governments offered to share in the expense. A year afterwards a surveying-ship was directed to make some hydrographic examinations; but, under the instructions given, many years would elapse before the work could be completed. Requests were made to have the survey accelerated, but without avail. In 1890 the cables of the Eastern Extension Company were broken, when the whole of the Australian Colonies were isolated telegraphically for a considerable time. This circumstance pointed to the extreme importance of pushing forward the nautical survey, so as to hasten the establishment of an alternative line from Australia to Great Britain by way of the Pacific. The colonies again and again urged that the survey should be accelerated; but the request was unheeded. Instead of being accelerated it was stopped, without any reason being given. As a matter of fact (as was ascertained long afterwards), the ship was withdrawn from the work in September, 1890, and the discontinuance of the survey was not made known to Canada and the colonies until 1894.

“In 1893, the Parliaments of Canada and New South Wales having voted each a subsidy towards establishing a steamship service between British Columbia and the Australasian Colonies, the Government of Canada ‘deeming it important to take prompt and effective steps for the stimulation of closer trade relations between Canada and Australasia,’ on the 7th September, 1893, an Order in Council was passed requesting the Minister of Trade and Commerce to proceed to Australia to confer with the several Governments, with a view to promote the extension of trade and the establishment of the Pacific cable. On 11th September, the Colonial Office, London, was informed of the intended mission of the Canadian Minister, and requested to promote the object of his mission. The Minister sailed from British Columbia on the 17th September. Two days before he sailed—that is to say, on 15th September—despatches were sent from the Colonial Office to each of the Australasian Governments containing only documents adverse to the Pacific cable. These consisted of a letter from the General Post Office, London, dated the 5th July, 1893, and a report by the Hydrographer, dated the 28th February, 1887. (See Mission to Australia, p. 79.) [Not printed. See Enclosure 1 in No. 3, F.-5, 1894.]

“The Minister reached Australia, and had conferences on the following dates, viz.: With the Government of New South Wales, 11th October, 1893; with the Government of Queensland, 20th October, 1893; with the Government of Victoria, 30th October, 1893; and with the Government of South Australia, 2nd November, 1893. These several Governments had received copies of the antagonistic documents before the arrival of the Canadian Minister, and, as he points out in his report, these documents were not helpful to his mission.”

Again, while the Canadian Minister was in Australia, engaged in the above conferences with the Australasian Governments on the subject of cable connection, an agreement designed to strengthen the monopoly of the Eastern Extension Company was entered into by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. This agreement, bearing date the 28th October, 1893, practically excludes Canada or any Australasian colony from establishing telegraphic connection with Asia (without the intervention of the Home Government) for a period which does not expire until the 28th October, 1918. A copy of this agreement will be found in the return of papers on the Pacific cable recently laid before the Canadian Parliament. [See Appendix A.]

These facts are well known, and they give ground for the fear that the Home authorities have not been in sympathy with the legitimate aims of Canada and the Australasian Colonies in respect to the Pacific cable; moreover, they appear to throw light on the inexplicable policy followed about the same period in another matter of great importance in connection with the proposed cable.

To connect Canada and Australasia telegraphically mid-ocean stations are absolutely necessary, and for a national line of communication it is indispensable that these stations be in the possession of Great Britain. The nearest island to Canada under the British flag is Fanning Island. But its distance from British Columbia is very great, involving the laying of a cable considerably longer than any yet laid in any part of the globe. In the adverse documents which confronted the Canadian Minister when he reached Australia great doubts are expressed as to whether the Vancouver-Fanning Island section could be laid or maintained. These doubts added to the very great importance of securing a landing-station less distant than Fanning Island from British Columbia. In the voyage of the Canadian Minister of Trade and Commerce to Australia, in September, 1893, it was discovered that a mid-ocean station eight hundred miles nearer Vancouver than Fanning Island was available. There exists in the middle of the ocean, on a direct course between British Columbia and Queensland, a small, uninhabited, rocky island, with an area of