

it be the case—and it is indisputable—that long-distance messages can be sent at no more actual working-outlay than short-distance messages, we have happily the means at our command which will greatly tend to unify and consolidate this widely scattered Empire, provided we have the wisdom and forethought to bring it into use. If the principle of State ownership of cables generally be carried into effect as suggested, I do not hesitate to state my belief that the day is not far removed when oversea messages will be sent from any one British possession to any other, whatever the distance, at the uniform charge, first of 1s. and eventually of 6d. a word.

I have always held a Pacific cable to be the initial link in a great chain of globe-encircling Imperial telegraphs. The mere advocacy of the Pacific cable has already benefited Australia by lowering charges levied on messages fully 50 per cent., and any accountant can estimate the enormous money-value of this benefit by the saving which has accrued during the past ten years. I do not doubt that the advocacy of the Imperial system will have a similar effect on the policy of the companies in still further reducing charges, but any such reduction will be incomparably less important than the advantages to result from placing the cables and telegraphs of the Empire under State control. At present it is recognised that the Empire is inadequately provided with the means of telegraphic communication, that commerce is unduly taxed in consequence, and that an embargo is placed on the free intercourse of the British people. The circumstances of to-day demand multiplied facilities for sending telegrams from any one part to any other part of the Empire at greatly reduced charges, in order to widen the use of telegraphy to all classes of the community. With an Imperial chain of cables established, incalculable advantages would follow, and Her Majesty's subjects, in whatever part of the world they may be situated, could interchange communications with the greatest possible ease and the greatest possible economy.

Some words may with propriety be added with respect to the position of Canada in the matter. It will be borne in mind that it is owing to the unparalleled expansion of the Empire and the resultant circumstances that some organization is absolutely needed to secure unfettered intercourse, and that in this respect the subject concerns Canada in common with Australia and all other parts of Her Majesty's wide domain. There is abundant evidence to show that in Canada we have common interests, common sentiments, common aspirations, and common sympathies with our kindred in Australia. Have we not during the past year sent our bravest to fight a common foe; and have not our sons fallen on the same field and been laid in a common grave? Before these lines reach Australia the world will have revolved into another year. At this date we in Canada appear to be standing in the old century gazing across the deep into the dawn of the new. We are distant spectators, yet intensely interested in the starting of the constitutional machinery of a sister-nation to dominate for all time in another quarter of the globe. We recognise and welcome the approaching great historical occasion as an epoch to denote the steady evolution of an unique empire of many commonwealths.

It will be apparent from the preceding remarks that a complete system of State-owned telegraphs encircling the globe would in no small degree contribute to the consolidation of the great oceanic empire. It will further be obvious that owing to the position of Australia in the southern seas and her comparative isolation from other parts of the world, still more by reason of the highly important place she is destined to fill among the nations, it would be fitting to signalise the birth of the new Commonwealth by initiating a comprehensive system of cheap and speedy communications of permanent advantage to the whole British people.

Naturally it is felt that the initiative must be taken by Australia. I trust, therefore, that Your Excellency's Government will see the way clear to take such action as may be expedient.

I have, &c.,

His Excellency the Right Hon. the Earl of Hopetoun,  
Governor-General, Commonwealth of Australia.

SANDFORD FLEMING.

#### NO. 4.—A STATE-OWNED TELEGRAPH SERVICE GIRDLING THE GLOBE.

*Letter to the Hon. Wm. Mullock, Postmaster-General of Canada. By Sir Sandford Fleming.*

SIR,—

Ottawa, 1st January, 1901.

On the opening of the new year I beg leave to submit the following remarks on a subject connected with your Department. I believe the views expressed will meet with your sympathy and the sympathy of the Government, as the subject is of great interest not only to the people of Canada, but to all other British people.

The change of the century is a peculiarly striking epoch to Her Majesty's subjects throughout the world when regarded as coincident with a turning-point in the history of the Empire. To-day another British nation enters on its constitutional career, to dominate in another quarter of the globe, and it seems to me that this is an opportune moment to consider a subject which affects Canada in common with Australia.

Yesterday Her Majesty's Home Government, with the Governments of Canada, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and New Zealand, completed a long-delayed arrangement, by jointly contracting for the establishment of the Pacific cable. This act of co-operation involves the adoption of an entirely new principle in connection with ocean cables—that is to say, joint State ownership. This principle was first mooted in a report on the progress of the Canadian Pacific Railway laid before Parliament in 1880. It was proposed by the Canadian delegates at the Colonial Conference of 1887, again at the Conference of 1894, and ever since these conferences, in season and out of season, it has been strenuously advocated. It was recommended by the Imperial Cable Committee in their report of 1897. At length the principle has been adopted, and its adoption is in my judgment of far-reaching importance. If closely followed up, I am satisfied that the Pacific cable, established as now determined, will prove to be the harbinger of a complete system of State-owned telegraphs, by land and sea, ramifying throughout the whole British Empire.