

girdle around the globe was from £5,000,000 to £6,000,000, but this included the Pacific cable, which will cost close on £2,000,000. The Pacific cable will shortly be completed. To provide and lay the remaining cables not far short of £4,000,000 will be required.

18. The foregoing paragraphs relate in brief detail the causes which have led to the complications which have arisen in Australia, and point out the inevitable outcome of the designs of the cable companies if they are allowed to go unchecked. The gravity of the peril has been indicated, and it is of such a character as to demand decisive action on the part of the Governments concerned.

19. Although the complications referred to by Mr. Mulock in the Canadian House of Commons had their origin in Australia, the question raised is not limited to that country. The antagonists of an Imperial system of cables conspired to defeat it, they played what from their own standpoint might be regarded as a master-stroke. This action has, however, brought forward an Imperial question of vital importance, in which we are all concerned, and the issues at stake are such that it is in the last degree inexpedient to place it in the power of any man, or syndicate of men, to gain control of the nervous system of this great oceanic Empire.

20. We have a common interest in a common object. We have a common interest in seeing that a gigantic cable combination shall not be fastened on the British people to handicap commerce and retard general progress, and still more are we all interested in seeing that it shall not remain as a menace to the security of the Empire.

21. The problem presented is of the first importance, and the solution of it rests with the statesmen from the self-governing parts of the Empire, to be assembled at the Coronation Conference. It can undoubtedly be solved by following the same policy as that adopted in the establishment of the Pacific cable—that is to say, by a partnership arrangement in which all will unite for the common good.

22. Our common object is the freest intercourse, and this object can best be attained by linking together all the great outposts of the Empire precisely as Canada, New Zealand, and Australia are now being brought into close relationship by means of the Pacific cable. The Imperial telegraph system will embrace in its circuit round the globe three great oceans. Of these, the Pacific will have its opposite shores telegraphically united in a few months. Then will remain the Indian and Atlantic Oceans to be traversed by nationalised cables. This, the crowning achievement, will cost, in round figures, £4,000,000, an insignificant expenditure of capital in view of the immensely important results to be attained. It would do more for the Empire as a whole than twenty times the amount spent in any other way whatever. It would set at rest the difficulty which has been caused in Australia. It would place the telegraphic service of the Empire on a secure and satisfactory basis, and render alienation of the leading cables impossible. It would be a fresh tie between all the great colonies and the Motherland of great practical utility; it would minimise transmission charges, and prodigiously increase the volume of telegraphic intercourse; it would benefit trade, vitalise the spirit of patriotism, and strengthen the sentiments which constitute the most enduring foundation on which the Empire of the future can be built up. The circumstances are such and the benefits so many and so great that whatever the cost the pan-Britannic telegraph service should as speedily as possible be carried to completion.

23. The establishment of such a service would affect the existing companies. The national telegraph encircling the globe would become the main or trunk line of communication between the great self-governing portions of the Empire. The existing private cables would to a large extent assume the position of branches to the trunk line, and as such would find employment in general and especially in international traffic. The charges for transmission by the trunk line would be lowered to a minimum, so as merely to cover cost of operating, interest, and maintenance; and as a consequence the business would be immensely increased. The companies would gain by the increase and likewise by the reduced charges on the main line, as they would thus be supplied with much profitable business for general dissemination.

24. The private cables were for the most part established with commendable enterprise many years ago. They received generous Government assistance. They have done useful pioneer work, and this work has already yielded to the enterprising investors rich returns. The time has come, however, when circumstances demand a change. It has become a matter of public expediency that the State should control an unbroken line of telegraph established for the safety and well-being of the Empire. It is possible, therefore, that the companies may have to rest content with more moderate gains than hitherto, at least until there be a new development of business under the changed conditions; that a development of telegraph business beyond all ordinary conception will result from the establishment of the Imperial service there can be no doubt whatever.

25. In the event of a determination being reached to complete the Imperial telegraph service, before proceeding to lay a State cable across the Indian Ocean the companies should be given the option to transfer, at a fair price, the private cable recently laid by them between Australia and South Africa, and arrangements should likewise be made to connect the Cape with the United Kingdom by a State-owned cable. These with the Pacific cable will complete the globe-encircling telegraph line, designed to link together the transmarine homelands of the British people on the five continents. It will prove an Imperial service in every sense. It will greatly promote the commercial and industrial well-being of all the parts. It will strengthen their relationship, and enable the whole fabric the better to withstand any stress or strain which the future may bring.

There is a rapidly growing desire on the part of the British people everywhere to strengthen the ties and multiply the links which unite the Mother Nation with the Daughter States. This feeling of attachment prevails in Australia and New Zealand. It is especially marked in Canada, and the writer feels himself warranted in expressing the foregoing views on behalf of Imperial-