

which has come to my notice. I have myself given the subject much thought, and am satisfied that, to strengthen Imperial cohesion, the course advocated by the Chambers of Commerce everywhere—and perhaps more especially by the Ottawa Board of Trade—is well calculated to bring fruitful results with the least delay. These bodies recommend the establishment of an Imperial cable service uniting the great divisions of the Empire with each other, and all with the Mother-country—a service encircling the globe, which, while greatly promoting trade, would in the highest degree foster free intercourse between the various groups of British people in all lands under the sway of King Edward. The President of the Ottawa Board of Trade reported at the last annual meeting that the Council has “placed itself in communication with commercial associations and individuals in all parts of the Empire. The replies received strengthen and confirm the views that there should be established as speedily as practicable a chain of State-owned cables and telegraphs to link together in the most effective manner the Mother-country, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, India, South Africa, and the West Indies.”

The President further reports that singularly favourable responses to the communications of the Board have been elicited from well-known sources in every quarter of the globe; that not a single adverse reply has been received; and that no argument has been advanced against the public policy of completing without loss of time the comprehensive chain of Imperial cables, of which the Pacific cable forms the initial and most important link.

By such means the prohibitive charges heretofore exacted on the intercourse of the British people around the globe would be set aside, in some cases the tax would be entirely removed, and it would become possible to invoke the aid of the Press as one of the most powerful agencies in advancing Imperial organization. I have elsewhere given my views in some detail on this point, and I would refer to a pamphlet issued and circulated by the United Empire Club of London, and likewise an article in the *Empire Review* for August last. In those publications it is pointed out that the State-owned cable across the Pacific is engaged in transmitting ordinary traffic only a few hours each day, and lies idle at the bottom of the ocean not less than twenty hours in every twenty-four. It is shown to a demonstration that a free Press service can be established during a portion of the idle hours of the cable without adding in the least to working-expenses. It is suggested that this means of instantaneous communication between countries widely separated by the ocean be more fully utilised than at the present time; it is urged that the chain of Empire cables be completed, and, when not employed in ordinary paying traffic, that arrangements be made by which they would be used, under the control of an Intelligence Department, in the free transmission of news and general information for daily publication in any newspaper in all parts of the British world. But I must leave the articles to which I refer to speak for themselves.

On this date a hundred years ago events were transpiring near the entrance to the Mediterranean which rendered the British Empire of the nineteenth century and many succeeding centuries possible. Since then a process of development has been going on, and it appears desirable to some persons that development should now be accelerated. We must be careful, however, that progress may not be arrested by undue haste. The British people are grouped in democracies under monarchical forms, and they are entitled to claim the right to be placed in possession of a general knowledge of matters which concern their well-being. It is manifestly of the first importance that they should be well informed, and that they should gain clear ideas; until then it is not probable that any “cut and dried” scheme which materially affects them will readily be assented to.

If my memory does not fail me, it was said, in the discussion on the paper of Sir Frederick Pollock at the Royal Colonial Institute, that the British Constitution is regarded as a model of strength, for the reason that it was not invented by any body all in one piece, but has grown through process of long years. By analogy, if the greater British Empire is to have a constitution that will stand the stress of time, not a few think that it had better come by growing. To accelerate the process of evolution, I am satisfied that the most certain course is to begin by utilising to the fullest extent that heaven-sent means of transmitting human words across the ocean, and by cultivating the freest and most friendly intercourse between all those people who go to make up the Empire.

In submitting these remarks, I need scarcely state that I do so in no spirit of fault-finding. If I am correct in the belief that one of the purposes of the gentlemen who have spoken to us is to ascertain how far we approve of their proposals, it is fitting that we should speak frankly. For myself, I have done so, and I believe I have spoken the mind of many others. I am sure we all very fully appreciate the public spirit and kindness of the distinguished gentlemen from England who have been so good as to take us into their confidence.

Faithfully yours,
SANDFORD FLEMING.

Letter No. 2.

MEMBERS OF THE CANADIAN CLUB,—

Ottawa, 26th October, 1905.

On the 21st instant I ventured to address a letter to my fellow-members, giving expression to the thoughts which arose in my own mind on hearing Sir Frederick Pollock and Mr. Geoffrey Drage speak on the great subject which they brought before the Canadian Club on that day. In my letter of the 21st I ventured to suggest that these gentlemen would do well to reverse the sequence of their proposals. Before they left Ottawa, a few days afterwards, they appear to have decided to do so.

Yesterday they addressed a public meeting in the rooms of the Montreal Board of Trade, when Sir Frederick informed those present to the effect that he and his colleagues had discovered that the time was not ripe for the first part of their proposal—viz., the formation of an Imperial Council—but that the strongest reasons exist for immediately instituting an Imperial Intelligence Department.