

absolute decision may have been arrived at concerning them, the Conference did agree as to the importance of the Empire acting together on questions of this kind, and of getting such complete information as would enable such action to be taken. There was no idea of one part of the Empire seeking to gain an undue advantage over the other, and the only thing I would say to the gentleman who spoke against the lecture, Sir John Colomb, is that on that occasion nobody suggested the idea of doing anything other than was just and fair to every part of the Empire. There may be some divergence of opinion as to the vast responsibility which belongs to Great Britain, not as the Empire, but as head of the Empire. An Empire can be nothing without its head, and we look to the House of Commons, the House of Lords, and the Queen, as representing this Empire, to do their duty along with those who are beyond the centre. What was that duty expected to be? The first thing they determined upon was that before taking "a leap in the dark," before embarking on this great expenditure, we should ascertain what that expenditure would amount to. Now nobody at that time knew what the cost of the cable would be, and with that view an Admiralty survey of a complete character was thought to be necessary. I am not saying that they agreed that the whole of the responsibility should rest on the Imperial Government, but they did declare that in the interest of the Empire this matter was of sufficient importance to require an exhaustive survey to enable those concerned to determine whether the project was reasonably within their means. That work, so far as I know, has never been completed, and as a matter of fact we do not know, if we took the route suggested, how much the scheme would cost. Here I would say that I sincerely hope the Government will have sufficient firmness and confidence to resist any request improperly and unreasonably made. It has agreed to the Conference at Ottawa, which is to be a Conference of delegates from the various Colonies and from the head of the Empire itself. As I said at the outset, I believe the Paper was read with a clear object, and that object was to tell the story from the author's point of view on the important subjects which are to be raised at that Conference. I am not now going to say whether in my opinion Victoria, New South Wales, and the other Colonies have always subscribed to the full amount for everything that had reference to the welfare of the Empire. It is too large a question, and, besides, it is not the question to-night. The question is, Ought we to have communication under British control from Canada to Australia? Is it desirable in the interests of the