

good. The Agents-General have no power to do anything effective in a question of this kind, except as advised by their respective Governments; and a division of opinion which probably would have arisen among them would have militated against the action which we have all been authorised to ask for from the Imperial Government in the appointment of a Commission.

I have, as you know, always resisted Mr. Fleming's proposals to have the bulk of the cost of a Pacific Cable thrown upon the Colonies, as I have never entertained a doubt that, whenever Canada and the Australasian Colonies agreed to make a substantial contribution towards the construction of the Cable, Her Majesty's Government would be prepared to assume a very large amount of direct responsibility; and the proposal now made by Mr. Fleming that they should only grant a loan sufficient to cover the excess of expenditure by the Fanning Island route over that of the Neckar Island route, and that the interest on that loan should be charged on the surplus earnings, would probably fall far short of the assistance which the Imperial Government will prepared to grant.

Of course if the Government do not agree with me in this matter, I will at once place Mr. Fleming's letter before the Agents-General; although, as I have stated before, I do not see how that can in any way advance the object in view.

I need not add how greatly I am gratified that our long-continued exertions have secured so favourable a result in reference to both these important questions, and I felt it my duty under the circumstances to communicate to you my readiness to go out to confer with you in regard to them, in the belief that I might be able to assist your deliberations and that we might confidently anticipate the complete success of our efforts.

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