

penny-postage), there are the best reasons for anticipating a wonderful reduction in the rate for the transmission of ordinary paying messages by the route of the great girdle of Imperial Cables. I can see no reason why the charge should not eventually be reduced to the uniform rate of a penny a letter, or sixpence a word, between the Mother Country and each of the countries named, as well as reciprocally between any two of them. The immense advantage of such a possible reduction will be readily appreciated when it is remembered that the present charge between Great Britain and Australia is three shillings per word, and at the time of the Colonial Conference of 1887, when the Pacific Cable was first earnestly considered, the common charge was nine shillings a word.

The possibility of these results will be made apparent by reference to page 35 and other pages of the papers appended to my letter to Lord Elgin.¹

PLANS PROPOSED.

With respect to the course to be followed by the controlling Boards in carrying on the Intelligence Service, omitting details, two general plans suggest themselves for consideration.

The first plan—Each Board to take means through an efficient staff of paid officers to collect information of general interest desirable to be made known in distant parts. Such information, after being arranged and properly edited for publication, to be regularly transmitted by telegraph and made available for the Press throughout the Empire free of charge.

The second or alternative plan is to leave the question of the supply of news within the Empire in the hands of the Press, as at present, and to encourage and secure the transmission of a copious supply of desirable information by lowering the Press charge to a merely nominal rate. I am

¹ See Canadian Parliamentary Return (Nos. 67 and 67A, 1906), to be obtained, free of charge, on application to the Secretary of the Eighty Club, 3 Hare Court, Temple, London, E.C.