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of one steamship in transporting the wire from the American coast to the center of the ocean, where it is to meet a British ship, and the wires are to be attached to each other, and the communication made complete. If it works well, we then incur the responsibility of paying \$70,000 a year for the use of the telegraph by this Government. This is all there is of it; and when the profits of the company shall equal six per cent. on the cost, we are to pay only \$50,000 a year.

I think we gain more than that even in the saving of mail service. It is now a matter of vast importance that our mail steamers should go across the ocean in the shortest possible time. Our vast pecuniary interests depend upon the earliest possible intelligence. When this wire shall be in operation what difference will it make whether the vessels take ten days, or twelve days, in crossing the ocean with the mail bags, when your commercial intelligence is going through each day and each hour? If you have a friend on the other side of the ocean, you can communicate with him in a few hours, if not in a few minutes. If you have any business transactions, you can conduct them as well without the mail as with it. It therefore dispenses with that stern necessity of saving a few hours in the transmission of the mails. I need not spend the time of the Senate to prove that probably one half of the expense of transporting the mails across the ocean is occasioned by the effort to save five or six hours or one day's time in a voyage. You can get your mails carried for half price if you will allow the vessels to take two days more in the voyage. It is for the speed that you pay the bounty. The high bounty is for the greatest possible speed.

When I look into this proposition, I cannot conceive on what ground objections to it rest. I cast out of view entirely the war argument; I look upon it solely as a peace, as a commercial, and as a business measure. In that point of view I believe the Government will obtain more service for the amount of money, than by any other contract that we have ever made, or now can make, for the transmission of intelligence. It is a mail operation. It is a Post Office arrangement. It is for the transmission of intelligence, and that is what I understand to be the function of the Post Office Department. I hold it, therefore, to be as legitimately within the proper powers of the Government, as the employing of a stage coach, or a steam car, or a ship, to transport the mails, either to foreign countries or to different portions of our own country.

Is the amount to be paid too much? Clearly not. I will venture now the assertion, that every Senator on this floor was astonished at the small amount of money asked for to accomplish this great object. I had supposed it was going to occasion an expense of several hundreds of thousands of dollars a year instead of \$70,000. I look upon it as a wise and economical measure, as one coming properly within the conceded powers of this Government, and involving no latitudinous or wide construction in order to find the authority of the Government for the measure.

Mr. SEWARD. There was an American

citizen who, in the year 1770, or thereabout, indicated to this country, to Great Britain, and to the world, the use of the lightning for the purposes of communication of intelligence, and that was Dr. Franklin. I am sure that there is not only no member of the Senate, but no American citizen, however humble, who would be willing to have struck out from the achievements of American invention this great discovery of the lightning as an agent for the uses of human society.

The suggestion made by that distinguished and illustrious American was followed up some fifty years afterwards by another suggestion and another indication from another American, and that was Mr. Samuel F. B. Morse, who indicated to the American Government the means by which the lightning could be made to write, and by which the telegraphic wires could be made to supply the place of wind and steam for carrying intelligence.

We have followed out these suggestions of these eminent Americans hitherto, and I am sure at a very small cost. The Government of the United States appropriated \$40,000 to test the practicability of Morse's suggestion; the \$40,000 thus expended established its practicability and its use. Now, there is no person on the face of the globe who can measure the price at which, if a reasonable man, he would be willing to strike from the world the use of the magnetic telegraph as a means of communication between different portions of the same country. This great invention is now to be brought into its further wider and broader use—the use by the general society of nations, international use, the use of the society of mankind. Its benefits are large—just in proportion to the extent and scope of its operation. They are not merely benefits to the Government, but they are benefits to the citizens and subjects of all nations and of all States. I think there is not living in the State of South Carolina, or Tennessee, or Kentucky, or Virginia, a man who would be willing to have the use of the telegraph dispensed with or overthrown in reducing the cost of exchange of his particular products to the markets of the United States. I think so because of the celerity with which communication of the state of demand and supply in a distant market affects the value of the article in the hands of the producer, and reduces by so much the cost of the agencies employed in its sale. Precisely the same thing which thus happens at home must necessarily happen when you apply it to more remote markets in other parts of the world.

I might enlarge further on this subject, but I forbear to do so, because I know that at some future time I shall come across the record of what I have said to-day. I know that then what I have said to-day, by way of anticipation, will fall so far short of the reality of the benefits which individuals, States, and nations will have derived from this great enterprise, that I shall not reflect upon it without disappointment and mortification.'

Mr. TOUCEY. No one has made an objection that there is any want of constitutional power, nor that this is not a legitimate object for our