

REPLY OF HIS EXCELLENCY, EARL GREY,  
GOVERNOR GENERAL OF CANADA.

You, gentlemen, representing the Ottawa Board of Trade, have asked that I should receive you for the purpose of enabling you to explain the measures which you think should be adopted in the interests of Canada and the Empire with regard to the establishment of what is known as the All-Red Line, and to enable you to give expression to your desire that I should bring the subject of your hopes before the attention of the Crown.

The Ottawa Board of Trade already enjoys throughout the Empire an honorable reputation as an organization which is animated by a spirit of lofty and far-seeing Imperialism, and any request coming from you would naturally call from me the friendliest and most sympathetic consideration, but the fact that Sir Sandford Fleming is the member of the Board of Trade through whom the request for this interview has reached me, invests it with an exceptional urgency. The admiration I feel for him and the sympathy I have for the objects with which his name is so closely and honorably connected, would make it difficult, almost impossible, for me to refuse your request.

For upwards of twenty-five years, Sir Sandford Fleming has devoted his energies to the task of securing for Great and Greater Britain, the advantages of cheapened telegraphic service. The bare recital of his efforts in this direction almost suggest the missionary fervor of St. Paul. He has without hope of personal gain, visited five continents; he has traversed all the great oceans, the Atlantic many times; he has given himself, his time, and his substance ungrudgingly and without stint to the service of the Empire, and in the realization of his hopes, which I trust is not far off, and in the general recognition that the life of Britons all the world over will have been made the happier by his efforts, he will find at the appointed time, his well-merited reward.

Referring to the address you have presented, I thank you for the welcome which you have given me on my return from England. The chief reason that caused me to absent myself from my happy home in the Dominion for a space of less than a month was my desire to support Sir Wilfrid Laurier in his endeavour to impress upon the members of the Imperial Government the importance of establishing a fast trans-Atlantic service between Canada and England, and of thus making Canada not only the natural and God appointed but the accepted mail and passenger route between Great Britain and the Orient and those great British Dominions in the southern seas of New Zealand and Australia.