

telegraphic connections, between points so far distant as Vancouver and Australia, where ships can call for orders, commerce is sure to languish as it has in this case.

Still more from the point of view of the safety of the Empire, and thereby indirectly our own, this cable would be an agency whose importance cannot be exaggerated. In these days of wars and rumours of wars, and of cutting of cables by one of the combatants to embarrass the other, the necessity of a cable with its terminals on British territory is very clearly apparent. This proposed cable line, according to the most feasible route, will start from Vancouver, and then by way of Fanning Island and Fiji to Norfolk Island, from which it will fork to New Zealand and Australia. The total length will be something over 7,000 miles. The committee in England have fully established the feasibility of laying a cable in these waters at a reasonable cost. Under all these circumstances I am sure that we are in a position to ask the Imperial Government to drop the veil of secrecy which has been laid over the matter at present, and to come out fully and frankly and meet ourselves and the other colonies half way, not only in promising support to this scheme, but in maturing and carrying out the project. There is urgency in the matter at present for two reasons. In the first place, this Eastern Extension Company has been trying to obtain the assistance of the Australian colonies to another route, by way of the Cape of Good Hope, from Australia to England. In the second place, the French Government has a cable from New Caledonia to New Zealand, and steps have been taken to construct another link in a route which would connect New Caledonia with Hawaia, and thence by the American cable with San Francisco. If either of these schemes took practical form, the proposal for the Canadian cable would be at an end, because either of the others would serve the purpose of Australia, if not ours.

A profitable and growing trade between Australia and Canada cannot be accomplished by any other means than by this electric communication. We should then be the warehouse for European goods going to Australia and Australian goods coming to England over our great national highway, the Canadian Pacific Railway. I do not bring up this question with any idea of forcing the hand of the Government or urging it to say anything definite in the matter to-night, but in the hope that it will promote such a discussion as will give the Government some idea of the feeling in the House and country, and that there will be such discussion in the country, even in these days of interesting war news, as will call public attention to the matter, and enable the people to see that it is a national Canadian, as well as Imperial, work of great

Mr. CASEY.

importance and deserving of more activity on our part.

I do not know that I have anything further to add to what I have already said and to the remarks I have quoted from the greatest living authority on submarine cables, Sir Sandford Fleming. I could give interesting details from the various papers brought down, but although they would add to the interest of the subject, they would not add to the pleasure of the House to-night. I hope to hear from both sides on the question. I am sorry that some hon. gentlemen are not present whom I would desire to see here to-night. I refer to members from British Columbia on this side of the House—I see one on the other side—who are, to my knowledge, in sympathy with this scheme, but I am forced to bring it on in their absence on account of the nearness of prorogation.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I waited, Mr. Speaker, before rising, in the belief that some member of the Government would, in response to the very strong appeal just made by the hon. member for West Elgin (Mr. Casey), favour the House with the position which the Government propose to take on this very important question. I have not had an opportunity of reading the papers that have been placed on the Table, and from what my hon. friend says, I am afraid I would not derive a great deal of information if I had.

Mr. CASEY. Yes, the report of the Canadian commissioner is pretty full.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I speak of the matter so far as the views of the Government are concerned which is an important point; and, from what fell from my hon. friend who has just gone over this subject with so much care and ability, I am afraid I should not have learned a great deal as to the attitude of the Government. But I may say, that I am afraid that the Government have scarcely realized our just expectations in regard to this very important matter. The question was taken up with great zeal and great ability long ago by Sir Sandford Fleming, who gave the subject attention, not from the promoter's point of view, because he never dealt with the subject from that standpoint at all, but entirely from the higher point of view of what he could do—and it was a great deal—to bring such facts and evidence to bear upon the question as would commend it to the consideration of the Government and lead to its being taken up by the Government of Canada and other countries interested with a view to its accomplishment. I do not intend to say a single word with regard to its importance. The hon. member for West Elgin (Mr. Casey) has pointed out, that probably the failure of those who undertook the establishment of a line of communication between the great Island Continent of