

be greatly to be deplored, if any action should be taken by any one of the parties concerned, without the absolute consent and approval of the others. Not having been here when the hon. member for Ottawa (Mr. Belcourt), brought up the subject, and not having heard the remarks of my hon. friend (Mr. Casey), who has just taken his seat, I do not know whether the attention of the House has been drawn to what took place in the House of Commons on May 22. But I hold in my hand the *Times* report of the proceedings in parliament of that day, and, in my judgment, they are of a character to attract the very serious attention of any person who takes an interest in this very important question. In answer to a question regarding the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company, asked by Sir Charles Dilke, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, said:

Arrangements have been made with the Eastern Telegraph Company, by which landing rights will be given for the cable to St. Vincent, one of the conditions of which is the laying of a cable from Ascension to Sierra Leone. The Eastern Telegraph Company has entered into an agreement with the colonies of West and South Australia and Tasmania to construct, with all convenient speed, the line from Durban to Mauritius, Rodrigues, Cocos and Freemantle, in West Australia, and thence to Glenelg, South Australia, as soon as landing rights have been granted. Landing rights have been granted in Natal and in West and South Australia, and the company has been informed that Her Majesty's government are prepared to approve the granting of landing rights at Mauritius, Rodrigues and Cocos, and will issue licenses as soon as the general form of license now under consideration has been settled.

Having given this subject a good deal of attention, I regard that action as absolutely fatal to the Pacific cable from Canada to Australia ever being constructed unless one of the conditions made in granting the licenses in these various places by Her Majesty's government is that the Imperial government may at any time, under equitable conditions, come into ownership and possession of those cables. I have no doubt the attention of the government has been drawn to this subject and that they are quite apprised of the real condition, and that, as this question is one of almost vital importance to the empire and of great importance to Canada, they will take every measure possible to prevent any action being taken that will destroy our hopes in connection with this great undertaking.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Mulock). The question which has been brought to the attention of the House by the hon. senior member for Ottawa (Mr. Belcourt) is of sufficient importance to justify even at this late stage of the session, our giving a little time to the consideration of the present situation in regard to it. The

House has been taken fully into the confidence of the government both as to the views of the government and the attitude of the government in regard to this threatened danger to the successful accomplishment of the scheme. Nothing official has transpired since I last made an announcement to the House that goes to show any further development of the proposed concession of rights to the Eastern Extension Cable Company. My hon. friend the leader of the opposition (Sir Charles Tupper) has read an extract from the *London Times* intimating that an agreement had been made with West Australia, South Australia and Tasmania to allow landing powers in all or one of these colonies, and that the Imperial government, in return, was prepared to grant landing rights at intermediate points on British territory between South Africa and Australia. And it has been suggested by my hon. friend the senior member for Ottawa and other hon. gentlemen who have spoken, that this government should make representations to the Imperial government to preserve the rights of expropriating the cable as a condition of granting these concessions. The government has no intimation that either on the part of the Australian colonies that were partners in the Canadian Pacific scheme, in regard to which we legislated last year, or of any of her other Australian colonies, or of the Imperial government, has any change in the situation taken place. We have read in the press and probably have had communications of an informal character announcing that concessions would be made to the Eastern Extension Cable Company which this government regard as threatening the success of the Canadian Pacific cable, but otherwise we have no further information. I can perhaps go this far without being pressed to produce documents—so far as we know, the negotiations are being carried on by the Pacific Cable Commission in England with a view to carrying out the scheme on the lines of our legislation. I believe the commission is actively proceeding with a view to putting the cable under contract at an early day. It would seem strange if the commission should proceed with the Hsblity endorsement of the Canadian parliament and people if such an arrangement, as has been referred to has been in contemplation or had been made and no official communication made with the Canadian government. I cannot conceive therefore that there is any real foundation for this rumour and the Imperial government not take the Canadian government into its confidence. I agree with the leader of the opposition that the failure of this scheme would be a national calamity. Perhaps he is right in saying that it chiefly concerns Australia. When I took up this subject, I was of that opinion and had difficulty in discerning the Canadian interest in it. But, as I studied it,