

affording the much-needed connection with Fiji and other outlying dependencies. It will indirectly give a new means of communication with India, should the lines through Europe and the Red Sea become through war or other causes unusable. The new line will create common interests between Australians and Canadians; it will bring closer together the great outlying divisions of the Empire; it will play an important part in fostering British commerce and upholding the British flag on the Pacific. I humbly think that the £54,000 per annum, or whatever sum may be required to carry out the proposal now before the Government, would more advantageously be expended on the establishment of a new cable across the Pacific from Canada to Australia. Canada has always been prepared to contribute her full proportion of expenditure on works of an imperial character. If she has expended fifty millions of pounds sterling in building a great national highway from the Atlantic to the Pacific, who can doubt that she will be ready to do her share in establishing a new telegraph from her western coast to Australia. Is the opinion of the Colonial Conference, unanimously expressed, to be unheeded? Is it expedient that Canada and the Canadian route should be wholly ignored? Is it desirable that any course should be followed which will debar the Canadian Dominion from co-operating with her sister Colonies and with the Mother Country in a matter in which they each have a common interest? I venture to think that aid in the way proposed to the existing companies would be fatal to any Pacific telegraph; it would essentially be a step backwards, and could lead to no permanent good, while the same outlay expended in another direction would result in incalculable advantages. I speak advisedly, and with a thorough knowledge of what I speak, when I say that the sum of £54,000 per annum from the Australian and Imperial Governments, added to the assistance which may reasonably be expected from Canada and from other sources, would insure the completion of telegraphic communication between Great Britain and Australia by the Canadian route, and would realise the fulfillment of a national idea pregnant with lasting advantages to the great and growing communities under the one flag on the three continents. It would secure the completion of an alternative line of communication—British throughout—to multiply and strengthen the ties which bind the Empire together.

I trust I may be pardoned for presenting the subject as it strikes a Canadian. However ungracious the task, I am impelled by a sense of duty to seek the earliest opportunity earnestly to point out that in my humble judgment it would be an error of grave magnitude, equally in the interests of the Mother Country, Australia, and Canada, to give effect to the proposal now under the consideration of the Government.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your obedient servant,

SANDFORD FLEMING.

Letter from COLONIAL OFFICE to MR. SANDFORD FLEMING, C.M.G.

DOWNING STREET,

7th July, 1890.

Sir,

I am directed by Lord Knutsford to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 26th ultimo, in which you draw attention to the evils which you consider would accrue if Her Majesty's Government should entertain the proposal to join the Australian Colonies in sharing the payment of the present cable subsidy, and in a guarantee to the Eastern and Eastern Extension Telegraph Companies, in consideration of the reduction in the telegraph rates.

In thanking you for your observations, which have been laid before the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, I am desired to refer you to the answer given by Mr. Jackson to Sir G. Baden-Powell in the House of Commons on the 12th ultimo, in connection with this proposal.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN BRAMSTON.

NOTE.

On June 12th, in the House of Commons, Mr. Jackson, in reply to Sir G. Baden-Powell, intimated that Her Majesty's Government had not been able to accede to the proposal to join the Australian Government in the proposed guarantee to the existing Telegraph Company. On the 17th, Mr. Gosechen further discussed the question with the Agents-General, and promised that the matter would be fully reconsidered, and a definitive reply given. The above letter of July 7th, from the Colonial Office, goes to show that Her Majesty's Government remains in the position indicated by Mr. Jackson on June 12th.