

done to bring the self-governing colonies and ourselves closer together, and to develop the resources of the Crown colonies. The new Secretary did not lose any time in proving that he was in earnest. In November of the same year he received a deputation of Australian agent-generals on the subject of the Pacific cable. In reply to their representations, he declared that the Imperial Government was willing to assist in the matter, and proposed a Commission, to be formed of two delegates from Canada, Australasia, and Great Britain respectively. These delegates were selected at the beginning of last year, and the first meeting of the Conference took place on June 5. Unfortunately the sittings clashed with the Buda-Pesth Telegraphic Conference, at which the Australasian delegates were representing their Governments, and as it was too late for anything to be done in Parliament with regard to the project before the end of the session, the Conference was adjourned till November 11, when work was resumed.

The position as it now stands is a hopeful one for the immediate realisation of the All-British Pacific Cable scheme. The fact that France has already laid the Queensland-New Caledonia section, and that America, Russia, Hawaii, and Japan are ready to assist in laying the San Francisco-Honolulu section, makes it imperative for the British project to be taken up at once if the French scheme is not to be the first in the field. As recently as December 2 the Minister of Commerce announced in the French Chamber of Deputies that, with a view to maritime and national security, he would soon have to ask for a large sum towards telegraphic extension. It

is extremely improbable that there will be enough traffic to support two cables between Australia and North America for some years to come, and priority is consequently all-important. That the Americans are fully alive to the situation can be seen from a recent speech of Mr Chauncey M. Depew at a meeting of the New York Chamber of Commerce.

"No power can estimate," he said, "and no language can adequately state, the benefits of a cable. Commerce is revolutionised, communication between different parts of the earth is infinitely quickened, and intelligence is widely disseminated. People are benefited by cheaper living, better homes, higher thinking, broader education. Peace is promoted among nations. The value of a cable has been inestimable on the Atlantic side, and the same advantages will accrue to the Pacific coast of America, if a cable is laid with communications to China, Japan, Hawaii, and Australia."

The objections which were raised in past years against the British Pacific Cable scheme have been met one by one and overcome. The Eastern Telegraph Company, with its allied companies, has been active in raising these objections; and the late Sir John Pender, chairman of this group of companies, in the interest of his shareholders, opposed the project with all his well-known energy and ability, belying for once his claim to be the leader of telegraph extension throughout the world. At first Sir John Pender contended that the cable could not be laid at all; then, if laid, that it could not possibly pay; finally, that if it had to be laid, his company should have a voice in the construction. There is no doubt that the Eastern and Eastern Extension Companies have rendered great service to India and Australia; but they have not