

the Royal Society of Canada, and of the Canadian Institute of Toronto, and of any documents connected therewith, relative to the representation of Canada, in the International Conference, to determine a standard meridian now contemplated by the Congress of the United States.

He said:—I may briefly explain that for several years the subject of a standard meridian, and a general regulation of time throughout the whole world, has occupied the attention of scientists in this country, the United States and Europe, but it is one of special interest to the people of this continent, and to us of this Dominion. The geographical features of Canada and the rapid extension of our railroads over vast tracts of country, and other circumstances, all combine to render the movement to establish a standard meridian one of peculiar importance to us. The President of the United States, under the authority of a resolution of Congress, is about to call an International Conference to take this matter up, and in view of the general interest which Canada has in the question, the Royal Society of Canada, and I believe the Canadian Institute of Toronto, one of the oldest scientific institutions of Ontario, have memorialized His Excellency the Governor-General, praying that he will be pleased to use his influence with the Imperial Government to have Canada represented at the Conference. Should my motion be granted, and the documents to which I have referred be brought down, I propose to call the attention of hon. members more fully to the matter with a view of asking the concurrence of the House, in a resolution for an address to His Excellency asking that he will be pleased to use his influence with the Imperial Government, to secure for Canada representation at the forthcoming Conference.

HON. MR. ALEXANDER—I consider it my duty to make one or two observations upon this subject. Certain scientists on this continent have propounded a theory, which is a very plausible one, of adopting a new system of regulating time, by establishing a new Prime Meridian and local standard meridians around the whole world. Those scientists have approached the United States Government, which has invited the leading European Governments to send delegates to a Conference

at Washington. In plain words the British Government would be solicited to abandon their old Prime Meridian, viz: "The Royal Observatory of Greenwich," perhaps for some point on the Pacific Ocean—to be established as a basis for regulating time throughout the world. The best informed will tell those scientists, that to accomplish any result, they are aiming at too much. We rejoice to see our men of science and railway engineers employing a portion of their time in this direction, and, I am sure, we desire to cultivate always the most friendly relations with the people and Government of the United States,—where we are not acting in a manner antagonistic to the interests of the Empire, of which, we are proud, to form an integral part. What the best informed would advise those scientists to do, would be to hold conferences frequently amongst themselves until they succeeded in forming some principle of time division advantageous to the Railways and other interests—a principle which will commend itself to the common sense of the world at large. The theories hitherto submitted of establishing local standard meridians every 15 degrees or every hour of time across this continent would scarcely prove acceptable to the great trade centres, such as New York, Chicago or St. Louis, where they might fall to the east or to the west of such cities. When those scientists have arrived at some satisfactory solution of such difficulties—and not until then, should they attempt to disturb the great Prime Meridian which has hitherto prevailed. The most convincing proofs and arguments will require to be used, and for some period of time, to the great maritime power of which we are proud to be a part; and I am sure it will not be during the present century that Great Britain will entertain any thought of disturbing that great First Meridian—the Royal Observatory of Greenwich. Her geographical charts, which have, during the two last centuries, since 1675, been prepared by the ablest scientists of Europe, based upon that Meridian, are those which have been used by the greater part of the world—by nine-tenths of the navigators of the Atlantic and every other ocean.

Until the British Government believe it to be in the interests of the whole world,