

TELEGRAPHS & CABLES.

Canadian Pacific Ry. Co.'s Telegraphs.

This department, on behalf of the Commercial Cable Co., announces that on and after Mar. 1 the rates to Holland & Belgium will be the same as the rates to Great Britain, France & Germany, viz: 25c. a word. The Holland rate will be reduced by 7c. a word, & the Belgium rate by 5c. a word.

The Pacific Cable Scheme.

Sir Sandford Fleming's recent letter to Colonial Secretary Chamberlain regarding the establishment of an Imperial cable system, of which the trans-Pacific line between Canada & Australia would form one of the main links, has aroused considerable interest in Great Britain & has been widely & favorably commented on by the press. The London Daily Telegraph says of it:—

"Not from commercial, still less from financial, but from patriotic considerations the announcement which has been made by the Ottawa correspondent of the Times as to the Pacific cable scheme is of supreme interest & importance. The project, in popular language, is to lay down an 'all-British cable from the Pacific Coast of the Dominion of Canada, say from Vancouver, across the Pacific to the Australian Colonies.' Thereby Canada & Australasia would be put in communication by means of a cable which touched no foreign territory, & would join at Nova Scotia with the Atlantic cables, which come direct to Great Britain. In this way there would be practically secured independent telegraphic communication with the outlying parts of the Empire. The political advantage of this is obvious, but apart from the inherent merits of the Pacific scheme its completion would secure the probability of Great Britain speedily possessing a cable system which no foreign country could control, girdling the globe & connecting our Colonies, dependencies, coaling stations & naval bases.

"The beneficence of the Pacific scheme has been conceded, but hitherto its realization has been impeded by various difficulties. It may be stated at once that there is no notion that the Pacific cable should supersede the present Eastern routes. Its advocates only claim that it should be an alternative route, & they argue that, as the companies who are now doing the work are highly subsidized, it would be impossible for a new and independent organization to compete with them unless they were correspondingly aided by the countries benefited. For some years the question, who should bear the cost, and in what proportion it should be contributed by the interested communities, has been a matter of discussion & negotiation. It has been generally accepted as a fair basis of settlement that the money should be found by the three countries which would be connected by the scheme—Great Britain, Canada & Australasia. The Imperial Government has always been ready to bear its share of the cost, as has also the Canadian Government, but hitherto the proportion to be relatively contributed has not been settled. As to Australasia there have been greater difficulties to surmount, because any arrangement suggested had to be ratified by the Governments of the different Colonies—a process which has necessarily taken a good deal of time. It is now announced that Australasia has fallen into line, & has undertaken to provide four-ninths of the cost of this cable, while the Imperial Government & Canada have agreed to find, in equal proportions, the remaining five-ninths. Should this news be confirmed, there is a strong prospect of the Pacific cable being constructed with the utmost possible despatch.

"The idea is that the line should not be worked by a subsidized company, but should

be a Government-owned cable, managed by the three Governments who have found the capital. The cable is, indeed, a part of the scheme of Sir Sandford Fleming, of Ottawa, who is the pioneer of the agitation for a round-the-world system of cables under British control, & who has recently written to Mr. Chamberlain a long letter, giving at length the arguments in favour of his proposal. In regard to the Pacific line, it is contended that if Great Britain & the Governments associated with it were to retain the ownership of the cable, they could borrow the money required for its construction on such easy terms that they could adopt a very moderate scale of charges for the transmission of messages. A cheap system of telegraphic communication in such a case means closer union between the countries which it connects, the development of their mutual commerce, & the conferring of many social advantages.

Referred as an expert to T. Skinner, Chairman of the Halifax & Bermuda Cable Co., & of the Direct West India Cable Co., & a director of the Commercial Cable Co., a representative of the Daily Telegraph was assured that the Pacific scheme was a matter of great importance, especially in connection with an all-round-the-world British cable system. The experience of any one Government owning cables was, he pointed out, almost nil, and unless a country had the command at both ends & at all the places touched by it, a cable in time of war would be useless. If the all-round-the-world British scheme was realized, the cables would only touch the different parts of the Empire connecting them all by a system of which they would be joint owners, & with which no foreign country could interfere, unless, of course, as the result of a successful invasion, or by cutting the cable at sea. Mr. Skinner explained that his object had been to aid this linking together by a telegraphic chain the different parts of the British Empire. "The British Government," he said, "subsidized the Halifax & Bermuda Co. to extend the telegraphic communication from the Atlantic end at Nova Scotia to Bermuda, which is an important harbour for the British North American fleet, & it was the object of several years' agitation to demonstrate to the Government that the Co. should be assisted to get on to Jamaica, & so to place that island & the West Indies generally in direct communication with the mother country. All that we put before the Government was demonstrated at the time of the Venezuela crisis by the fact that when that crisis arose Great Britain was not able to communicate with Jamaica & the other parts of the West Indies, except through the United States. After that experience the Government & Parliament gave us a subsidy to lay a cable from Halifax to Jamaica. That cable was laid in 6 months, & it was just completed in time to enable the Spanish Government during its war with the U. S. to be in communication with Cuba & its other dependencies without its messages being subjected to the surveillance of the U. S. Government."

Telegraph Connection with Atlin.

J. W. Bridges, who has been up the Northern Pacific coast looking into the question of building a telegraph line to Atlin, said in a recent interview:—"So far as I have been able to see, there will be numerous difficulties to overcome. The country is exceedingly rugged & broken, & there are several lakes to cross which will necessitate the use of submarine cables. Some of these lakes, I understand, are both deep & broad, all of which increases the cost of construction. While ordinarily a fair estimate could be made as to the cost per mile for construction, in this case it would require a careful investigation of every foot of the ground to be covered, streams, lakes, depth of water, etc., before

anything like approximate figures of cost could be given. Then, also, the cost of maintaining a line, winter & summer, must be considered, especially in winter. The snows in your mountains are deep, & avalanches & slides are not uncommon at exposed points, so that a line constructed along the side of a mountain, which it appears to me will be necessary in order to get there for repairs, will be liable to injuries every winter.

"The parties that I represent propose a capital of \$50,000 to begin with. This will insure the construction of lines to Atlin & other camps; also an extension south to Juneau. While going up from Juneau, I attempted to follow the appearance of the coast along which a line should be constructed, but owing to the snowstorm I was unable to do as well as I had hoped to. I saw enough, however, to enable me to form an idea of the task of such an undertaking. There are many openings, canyons, creeks, etc., to cross; & the most practical plan, perhaps, will be to follow the shore line as close as possible, which will put the line in easy reach of the linemen in case of a break. The matter of a line from Juneau south to connect with the line at Victoria or some other point, has not yet been taken up, & will not be until we have the line into Juneau, which of itself will be a great step taken towards reaching the outer world."

—Victoria Colonist.

Canadian, B.C. & Dawson City Telegraph Co.—The Secretary of this Co., in London, Eng., informs us that the construction of the proposed lines will be in charge of E. G. Woodford, late State Mining Engineer, Transvaal. In regard to some criticisms on the Co's. prospectus made in a letter from us, the Secretary says:—"The estimate of 200 telegrams a day was arrived at by the directors after mature consideration, & they are well within the mark. The prospectus, as you say, did not contain any estimate of the proposed line. That would not be necessary, inasmuch as the directors had already concluded a contract with a responsible firm of contractors to construct the line."

We regret being unable to agree with the Secretary. In our opinion, the cost of construction should have been given in the prospectus, more especially as a contract had been let.

Halifax & Bermudas Cable Co.—The report for the year ended June last, presented at the recent annual meeting, says: "Since the last report the Co. contracted with the British Treasury to lay a cable to connect Bermuda with Jamaica, via Turk's Islands, & the Direct West India Cable Co. was formed to undertake the work. The contract was signed Aug. 2, 1897, & the cable was open for traffic Jan. 31, 1898. This extension greatly improves the position of your Co. by giving it through traffic. The receipts in the past year were £10,154, as compared with £3,742 in 1896-7. This increase is due to the opening of the Jamaica cable, & to the interruption of other routes during the Spanish-American war. The net result is a profit of £6,655, as compared with £951, an increase of £5,703. It is proposed to make a distribution of profits for the year by declaring a dividend of 5%, amounting to £2,500, leaving £4,155 to be carried forward. Offers for the sale of debentures to the trustees were invited in Dec. & June last, & £4,989 was paid for £5,100 of debentures, which amount has been written off capital expenditure."

On H. P. Dwight's Retirement recently from the Ontario Game Commission, of which he had been a member since its inception, the Commissioners unanimously passed the following resolution: "That the Commissioners desire to place on record their appreciation of the valuable services that have been rendered by Mr. Dwight as a member of this board, & at the same time to express the sin-