

12,000 fathoms to be found in the Pacific. Mr Patey afterwards withdrew the statement, admitting that he was in error; and indeed up to the present time the deepest sounding in the world does not exceed 5155 fathoms. The second objection was based on the hydrographer's report of the project in 1887. In this report it was stated that, from an Admiralty point of view, the sole use of such a cable would be communication with ships at Honolulu and Fiji,—an unimportant matter in times of peace, and during a war only important with regard to Fiji. From an imperial point of view it would be of little value, as in case of a breakdown occurring there would be no quick line of steamers to bridge across the broken section. In conclusion, it was argued that a single line of cable never paid commercially, that a very large subsidy would be required, and that if anything was to be done the existing route should be tripled.

It must be remembered that this report was written no less than seven years before the Ottawa Conference, since which date the circumstances affecting the case had undergone considerable alteration. With regard to the strategical advantage of an All-British route there can be no question; and as to the objection to a single line, even if it survived a declaration of war no more than a couple of days, the service it could render to the empire might represent many times its original value. It must also be remembered that the proposed cable is an *additional* line, and cannot but strengthen the present communication with Australia. In other words, a twofold communication with Australia already exists, and the laying of a Pacific cable triples

the telegraph service. The adverse character of the Post Office report in 1893 was felt by the Conference to be of greater weight. The total cost of the line according to their estimate was no less than £2,924,100. This was almost a prohibitive price, but the figures will be criticised later. Finally, there was the statement that no soundings had been taken between Honolulu and Vancouver, and that a survey was necessary before any decision could be arrived at.

The apparent necessity for a survey seems to have prevented the Conference from formulating any definite plan for the construction of the cable, and the following resolutions were the only result of their deliberations on the subject: "That immediate steps should be taken to provide telegraphic communication by cable, free from foreign control, between Canada and Australia; that the Imperial Government should be requested to make, at the earliest possible moment, a thorough survey of the proposed cable route, the expense to be borne equally by Great Britain, Canada, and Australasia; and that the Canadian Government be requested to ascertain the cost."

The report of the proceedings by the English representative, the Earl of Jersey, appeared in December 1894. The Report took a broad and liberal view of the situation; but with regard to the statement that the long stretches of water between Vancouver and the Sandwich Islands or Fanning Island were virtually unexplored, it is curious that the soundings of the Albatross and Thetis in 1891 and 1892, which were published in 1893, should have escaped the notice of the Conference. The discontinuance of the survey