

Your Excellency is in part familiar with the labours of the Board of Trade of the City of Ottawa and its members. In 1901, they entered upon an enquiry of the greatest importance; they opened correspondence with every known organized body representing the interests of British trade in all parts of the world. From time to time, they forwarded communications containing useful information, having reference to the most effective means of fostering trade, stimulating commercial activity, and creating an electric bond of unity between the parts of the Empire separated by the oceans. They invited and received replies to the correspondence, and by such means they came into possession of the views of a large number of persons associated with British trade throughout the world.

One of the earliest expressions of opinion came from Australia. The General Council of the Australian Chambers of Commerce affirmed "the unspeakable importance of a system of state-owned Telegraph and Cable lines connecting all the several portions of His Majesty's Dominions." The subject was brought up for discussion at the Fifth Congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the Empire, held in Montreal, in 1903, when the following formal resolution was adopted.

"That in the opinion of this Congress all the self-governing British Communities around the globe should be united by a continuous chain of State-owned telegraphs. That such an Inter-Imperial line of communication would, under Government control, put an end to the difficulty which has been caused in Australia by the allied Cable Companies, and remove all friction which has arisen between the partners in the Pacific Cable; That it would lower charges to a minimum on over-sea messages passing between New Zealand, Australia, India, South Africa, the West Indies, Newfoundland, Canada and the Mother Country; That it would provide a double means of communication, at low uniform rates, between the Mother Country, or any one British State, and all self-governing British States; That it would constitute the most effective means by which the several Governmental units of the Empire may hold communion with each other, whenever they desire, and that while it would be of the highest importance to the commercial and social interests of the British people around the world, it would, by the subtle force of electricity at once promote the consolidation of the Empire and prove an indispensable factor in Imperial Unity."

This deliverance was re-affirmed by the Sixth Congress, held in London, in 1906, with complete unanimity.

Having obtained similar expressions of opinion from many centres of political and commercial influence in both hemispheres, the Board of Trade of the City of Ottawa, in 1904, issued a circular letter in which was submitted a scheme of Empire Cables in complete harmony with the views of the Chambers of Commerce and the frequently expressed opinions of the British Empire Leagues in Canada and Australia, and other bodies. The scheme submitted was in outline as follows:—