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PAPER ON
THE ADOPTION OF A PRIME MERIDIAN.

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BY SANDFORD FLEMING, C.M.G.,

*Delegate from the Canadian Institute of Science, Toronto, and the American
Metrological Society, New York, to the International Geographical
Congress at Venice.*

The subject to which, with your permission, I shall briefly refer, is the establishment of a Prime Meridian and Time-zero, to be common to all nations.

The history of geographical science informs us that a great number of initial meridians have at various times been employed by astronomers and navigators. It is well known that Claudius Ptolemy of Alexandria was among the first to fix a meridian of reference. Ptolemy lived in the second century, when the habitable world was thought to be limited to countries around, or not far beyond, the shores of the Mediterranean. From time to time a knowledge of the earth's surface extended, and distinguished geographers arose, who adopted new initial meridians. It is not necessary that I should trouble you with a recital of the list of meridians from which, since the earliest period, longitudes have been reckoned. It is sufficient at this stage to refer to the fact that geographers of different nations have generally selected for starting points places of importance well known to them,