proposed Imperial highway from England, across Canada to Australia and the East. These three themes will undoubtedly suggest others of a cognate character; but it is not my purpose to speculate. Were there no other matters hinging on them, these would still be sufficiently weighty to mark the Conference with very great importance. In the first place, the question of trade relations involves a matter of great moment to the Australasian Colonies which can only be dealt with jointly. Unlike Canada, they cannot give preferential treatment to any outside country, although having the power to discriminate against each other to an unlimited extent. This bar in their respective constitutions prevents them from making a bargain with Canada on the basis of mutual concessions, no matter how anxious they may be to do so. For example, if they made lumber free in return for some corresponding freedom in our market, the United States and other lumber exporting countries would be able to take advantage of the arrangement without giving anything back. This disability would lie at the very threshold of all trade discussions, and its removal would be one of the prime objects of the Convention. This would carry with it the means in detail by which reciprocal trade could be stimulated, and would pave the way for a careful review of the needs of each. All this applies with equal force to South Africa.

The Pacific cable project was first mooted by Sanford Fleming, Esq., C.M.G., of Ottawa, and has been advocated by that eminent engineer with unremitting zeal for the past twelve or thirteen years. As a practical necessity, it has sprung into first-rate importance by the establishment of the line of steamers between Canada and Australia. At the present time, a message from this country to the Antipodes must cross the Atlantic to England, thence by numerous land and cable lines to Egypt, and through the Red Sea and Indian Ocean to Bombay; thence to Singapore, to Java, to the extreme north-eastern coast of Australia, and over the great desert of that continent to the great commercial centres of the colonies—crossing three continents, and covering a total distance of nearly 20,000 miles. For a short dispatch, this means a cost of about $5 per word, and to make matters worse, the line of communication is controlled by a monopoly which has wrung millions of dollars from the Australian colonies during the past fifteen years, and made for itself a vast fortune. The Eastern Extension Company owns 18,000 miles of telegraph lines, extending to Egypt, India, and China, and from the subsidies and guarantees which they have drawn from the Australasian colonies alone, it has more than paid the entire annual working expenses of that vast system. Last year the Company added upwards of $500,000 to a reserve which already amounts to more than $3,500,000, after paying a dividend of 7 per cent. on heavily watered capital. Australia wants relief from this oppressive monopoly, and Canada wants direct telegraphic communication across the Pacific at reasonable cost, as the necessary complement of the communication now had by a first-class line of steamers.

For military reasons, Great Britain also requires a cable to the East, the land portions of which shall be entirely under her control. The existing line passes through several foreign countries, and in the event of war could be interrupted at many points. Thus, it is proposed that the Pacific cable should be laid at a cost of about $8,000,000, on a joint guarantee by Great Britain, Canada, and the Australian colonies. The scheme in general has been commended by the Honorable Mackenzie Bowell, as Canadian Commissioner to Australia, and by the recent Australasian Postal Conference in New Zealand; but it has, and will