

the quickest possible one for mails and passengers between England and Japan and the Northern ports, if not the whole, of China, but also as, under certain eventualities, a most valuable and safe alternative route to India itself. Lord Salisbury was much impressed with the scheme as then unfolded to him, and did not hesitate to speak warmly of the feeling of security for Imperial interests in the East which would be engendered by the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway and the establishment of a fleet of vessels of the "armed cruiser" type on the Northern Pacific Ocean.

After Sir John Macdonald's return to Canada, the High Commissioner laid before the Government in fuller detail the scheme which the Canadian Pacific Railway Company was prepared to carry out, and a formal tender was sent in to the Post Office on 31st March, 1886.

WHAT THE OFFER WAS.—The Post Office had called for tenders for a Mail Service across the Pacific at the rate of 10½ or 11 knots an hour: Sir John Macdonald pointed out that, by the adoption of so comparatively a low rate of speed and the employment of second-rate steamers, not only would the advantage in speed over the Suez route which this line possessed as regards reaching Yokohama, Shanghai, and even Hong Kong, be minimized or altogether lost, but that the route, though itself considerably shorter, would be at a positive disadvantage as compared with that *via* San Francisco, which is served by vessels sailing under a foreign flag and capable of a higher speed than that proposed for the English line. It was shown, on the contrary, that if the Dominion Government, who have since called for tenders for an Atlantic service at a high rate of speed, and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, who were willing under certain conditions to build first-class vessels for the Pacific service, worked together, a fresh chain of communication between England and the far East would be established, at once exclusively British, admirably efficient, and supplying a more rapid delivery of mails and passengers than is attainable by any other route. In furtherance of this scheme the Company offered—

To carry the Mails fortnightly between Vancouver, Yohohama and Hong Kong at an average speed at sea of 14 knots, the highest speed ever contracted for on an ocean voyage.

To build for this purpose, under Admiralty supervision, vessels of a first class type, capable of steaming 18 knots, and adapted not only for the carriage of troops, but also for conversion at short notice into armed cruisers.