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POSTAL TELEGRAPH SERVICE BY SEA AND LAND.

Sir Sanford Fleming, the indefatigable—and we may fairly say, successful—pioneer of the Canada Australasian Pacific Cable, has not yet done with his work in that connection. In a memorial which he has addressed to Hon. Wm. Mulock, postmaster-general, and which has just been made public, he deals with two great undertakings which may be justly regarded as the logical complements of the Pacific cable enterprise, and indicates that Canada should once more take the lead in inaugurating and carrying them to a successful issue. These are: a State-owned Atlantic Cable and Postal land telegraphs through Canada, which would connect the two great ocean cables and give the mother country, Canada and Australasia, relief "from the thralldom of a powerful company, which has long taxed their intercourse with the outer world and persistently employs every means to perpetuate its rich monopoly."

Referring to the inauguration of the Pacific Cable project Sir Sanford says:

"I felt that I could not too strongly emphasize the importance of the undertaking and the far-reaching influence of the act of co-partnership entered into in the closing hours of the old century; an act resulting from thirteen years of deliberation, which has been constitutionally ratified by the Imperial parliament and by the parliament of Canada, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and New Zealand."

He then recalls the announcement made by Hon. Mr. Mulock in Australia on May 16th last, that he had been gathering information to submit to the Canadian government in regard to the establishment of a state-owned cable across the Atlantic, and the transfer of the land owned by telegraphs of the Dominion to the post office department. Sir Sanford considers that the time is ripe for the consideration, with a view to early practical action, of these important twin-projects, the inauguration of which, as the complement of the Pacific Cable, would create greatly increased freedom of inter- course between the mother country and the

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British nations beyond the seas, promote unification of the empire, and bestow important advantages, in closer communication at greatly reduced cost, upon the people of these British countries.

Sir Sandford Fleming first deals with the projected "state-owned Atlantic cable." He estimated that the undertaking would require a capital of \$2,000,000, and that the annual cost of maintenance and operation would be about \$166,000. By employing the latest improvements in telegraphy, such a cable, with a twenty word per minute service—now quite practicable—would be capable of transmitting a maximum of ten million paying words per annum, which, reckoned at the rate of two cents per word, would give a gross return of \$200,000 per year, a sum \$34,000 in excess of the total estimated charges for maintenance and operation. This estimate assumes that the cable would be constantly employed.

The sources of business are Australasian, Canadian and United States. (The route will be all British, and in that light the Atlantic cable is regarded as an indispensable adjunct of the Pacific cable.) The Australasian business Sir Sandford estimates at 4,000,000 words per annum; the Canadian business between Canada and Great Britain would be not far from 1,000,000 words per annum—in all 5,000,000 words; and with the reduction of messages from twenty five cents to five cents per word, it is reasonable to assume that the volume of business would be materially increased. In addition to all this it is estimated that a considerable overflow of business, attracted by reduced charges, would be drawn from the large cities of the United States.

We assume that Sir Sandford's estimates are based upon the most reliable data available, and can therefore be considered as at least approximately correct, fully justifying his conviction that a state-owned Atlantic cable "would find abundant employment," and affording strong ground for his contention that "the low tariff would so rapidly develop business that, before very long, such cables would require to be multiplied, and perhaps a still lower tariff adopted in order that the greatest freedom of intercourse may be promoted between the Mother country, Canada, and the daughter nations beyond the seas."

In dealing with the nationalization of the land telegraphs of the Dominion, Sir Sandford Fleming draws attention to the significant fact that the telegraph lines of the United Kingdom have been expropriated and placed in charge of the post office department, and that India, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand have also assumed the telegraph service. Canada is thus the only country within the empire in which the land telegraph lines are not state-owned and administered by the post office department. In Great Britain the postal telegraph service, Sir Sandford says, "is remarkable for its utility and economy," and therefore of immense advantage to the people of the United Kingdom. There does

not seem to be any valid reason why a state-owned telegraph service should not be a success in Canada. Noting the fact that nearly every European nation has nationalized its telegraph service, he says:

"If in comparatively small countries the policy has proved eminently successful, who will deny that, in view of the geographical conditions of the Dominion, there is no country on the face of the globe where the remarkable peculiarities of the electric telegraph can be turned to a better account than here in Canada."

It is obvious that, as in the postal service, a reduction in the cost of the telegraphic service would be followed by a rapid increase of business, because telegraphy would be brought within the means of a large number of people who now are practically excluded by heavy telegraphic tolls from using either cables or land lines to any extent. The government would only require to make the service self-sustaining, not to reap a large revenue. The advantage, therefore, as in the postal service, would go to the people. Altogether irrespective of the proposed state-owned Atlantic cable, the nationalization of the land telegraph lines of the Dominion would be a paying investment for the people of Canada; and it is worth while noting that public opinion is steadily, if not rapidly, developing in that direction. It must not, however, be forgotten that state-owned Pacific and Atlantic cables, with the nationalized land telegraph lines of the Dominion, would bring the mother country and the great self-governing colonies of the empire into close touch and relations, and give a valuable impetus to the rapidly growing movement for the unification of the empire.

We have thus touched upon a few of the more prominent points in Sir Sandford Fleming's brochure, which we commend to the consideration of the people of Canada, as well as of the parliament and government of the Dominion. We regret that the limited space at our disposal prevents the DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN dealing at greater length with the more important details of the scheme. The facts stated by Sir Sandford and the estimates he has made will prove interesting and instructive reading, and we have no doubt will receive the thoughtful consideration of Canada's public men. To this, at the very least, they are clearly entitled.

While Sir Sandford Fleming is now well up in years, he has good reason to hope that he will be spared to witness the completion of the Pacific cable project. It will give great pleasure to the people of Canada should he be spared to see the successful inauguration of the greater project which he has so lucidly and ably advocated in his brochure to which we have had much pleasure in directing the attention of our readers.

The Ledger Monthly for January contains its usual store of interesting store of reading matter. Short stories predominate, being for the most part well written and illustrated. An article on "A winter resort in the Tyrolese Alps" gives a good description of Innsbruck, the capital of the Austrian Tyrol. The different departments, Housekeeping, Fancy Work, Cooking and Health are all very helpful.—The Ledger Publishing Co., New York.