

principles of American freedom, in the language of Shakespeare, around the globe. In this attempt to unite two continents, we are gravely debating whether we will accept the boon or not, for it is a voluntary one! The trifling sum of money is so small that scarcely a Senator here objects to it as a money consideration at all. That does not enter into our calculations. If there be anything said on the subject, it is surprise that we are to get the advantages, as we suppose them to be, for so small a sum of money. I shall vote for the bill.

At the conclusion of the debate the bill was passed, as follows:

A bill to expedite telegraphic communication for the uses of the Government in its foreign intercourse.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of State, in the discretion and under the direction of the President of the United States, may contract with any competent person, persons, or association, for the aid of the United States in laying down a submarine cable, to connect existing telegraphs between the coast of Newfoundland and the east of Ireland, and for the use of such submarine communication, when established, by the Government of the United States, on such terms and conditions as shall seem to the President just and reasonable, not exceeding \$70,000 per annum, until the net profits of such person, or persons, or association, shall be equal to a dividend of six per cent. per annum, and then not exceeding \$50,000 per annum for twenty-five years: *Provided*, That the Government of Great Britain shall, before or at the same time, enter into a like contract for those purposes with the same person, persons, or association, and upon terms of exact equality with those stipulated by the United States: *And provided*, That the tariff of prices for the use of such submarine communication by the public shall be fixed by the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States and the Government of Great Britain, or its authorized agents: *Provided further*, That the United States and the citizens thereof shall enjoy the use of the said submarine telegraph communication for a period of fifty years, on the same terms and conditions which shall be stipulated in favor of the Government of Great Britain, and the subjects thereof, in the contract so to be entered into by such person, persons, or association, with that Government: *Provided further*, That the contract so to be made by the British Government shall not be different from that already proposed by that Government to the New York, Newfoundland, and London Telegraph Company, except such provisions as may be necessary to secure to each Government the transmission of its own messages by its own agents.*

#### APPENDIX.

The following correspondence is as interesting as it is pertinent in this connection:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
WASHINGTON, December 30, 1856.

Sir: The submarine communication which now excites so much attention, both in the Congress of the United States and the country, will, I perceive by the map of the survey, terminate on this side the Atlantic in the British possessions, i. e. in Newfoundland.

Will you do me the favor, at your earliest convenience, to answer the following questions, to wit:

Is there a point, under our flag, which would answer for the western terminus?

If not, what are the obstructions?

What influence would it have in a military point of view?

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

C. C. CHAFFEE.

Lieutenant MAURY, United States Navy.

U. S. N. OBSERVATORY AND HYDROG. OFFICE.  
WASHINGTON, December 31, 1856.

SIR: I have received your note of the 30th instant, making certain inquiries in relation to the submarine telegraph of the Atlantic, and wishing to know what are the obstructions which prevent the western end of the wire from being brought straight across the sea to our own shores.

The difficulties are manifold, and, in the present state of the telegraphic art, they may be considered insuperable.

The shortest telegraphic distance between the British Islands and the United States, without touching English soil by the way, is, in round numbers, three thousand miles, and the lightning has never yet been made to bear a message through a continuous wire of such a length. Here, therefore, is an obstruction.

The distance from the Western Islands to the nearest port on our shores is about equal to the distance between Newfoundland and Ireland; and the distance between the Irish coast and the Western Islands is about fifteen hundred miles. Therefore, with a relay on the Western Islands, a line from Ireland, via those Islands, to our own shores, is electrically practicable.

But a wire by that route would have to cross the Atlantic at its deepest part, and then the Portuguese Government, as well as the English, would have control of the line; so that, in a military, commercial, or political point of view, nothing would be gained by underrunning the Atlantic with the telegraphic wires by that route. Moreover, that route would lead the wire across a volcanic region. These constitute obstructions that, in the present state of our knowledge, are fatal to such a route.

The only practicable route for a submarine telegraph between the United States and England appears to be along the "plateau" of the Atlantic, whereon it is proposed to lay the wire that is now in process of construction.

But suppose a line were to be constructed by American enterprise from the British shores, submarine, all the way to one of our sea-port towns: *cui bono*? In time of peace the line along the "plateau" would, by reason of its great advantages, take all the business; and in war the British authorities need but cut the American cord, or take charge of its office at the other end, to render the whole line inoperative or perfectly useless to us.

It cannot but be regarded by every wise and good man as a fortunate circumstance that this great enterprise of the sub-Atlantic telegraph is the joint work of England and America. This circumstance ought of itself to serve as a guarantee to the world that in case of war—should war unhappily ever be waged between these two nations—that that cord is never to be broken, or to be used otherwise than freely and fairly alike by the two nations, their citizens and subjects.

We have just seen the great nations of Europe emerging from the horrors of a fierce and bloody war; and yet, to their honor and the glory of the age be it said, that that strife, vengeful though it was, was not savage enough to break a single line of telegraphic wire. The lightning ran to and fro with messages between St. Petersburg and the capitals of France and England, as it now

does. And after that means and quiet bottom Government the face of age, converted again.

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