

terms which the British Government make. The proposition of the Lords Commissioners of the British Treasury is to pay a certain per cent. on the cost of the work, amounting to £14,000. The grant is limited so as not to exceed four per cent. of the expense of laying the telegraph down; and that percentage is calculated to amount to £14,000. It is stipulated by the Commissioners of the Treasury, that if the British Government send messages over the line in any one year which, at the price charged to the community, would exceed £14,000, they are to make allowance for the excess. The President is not to exceed the price stipulated in the contract made by the British Government, and we are to have all the rights which that Government may possess.

Mr. RUSK said: A proposition was submitted by the company, asking for the aid of the British Government, and an answer was received from that Government agreeing to furnish the aid of ships in laying down the wire, and to pay a sum not exceeding £14,000 for the use of the work when completed. In other words, they will secure to the company an amount equal to four per cent. upon what they said would be the capital required to complete the work. Then we propose to do precisely what the British Government has done. They have made certain stipulations as to having the use of the telegraph; and in those stipulations they provide that they shall have the preference over every one that may want to use the line, except the Government of the United States. This leaves an opening, and was doubtless intended to do so, to permit the Government of the United States to contribute equally with the British Government in aiding the line, and then having an equal use of it.

In the first place, I think there is no danger of the contract being changed by the British Government, especially when it has been based on a proposition made by the parties, and accepted by the British Government. They would not be likely to change it without consulting the Government of the United States, because they seem to desire that the Government of the United States should be put on precisely the same footing with themselves. The bill puts the two Governments exactly on the same footing; and it places the whole power in regard to this contract, on our part, in the hands of the President. It is an experiment, and a very important experiment. The amount which it is likely to take from the Treasury of the United States will be only \$70,000 a year.

Mr. SEWARD. If this is to be the most serious opposition to the bill, I can remove all objection to it by proposing amendments calculated to meet the objection. It is only a matter of detail; and if the honorable chairman will allow me, I will read the amendments I propose to offer to remove the objection. The first is: after the words "just and reasonable," in the eleventh line, to insert:

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.

This amendment brings it down to the proposition already made. I propose, also, a further amendment at the close of the bill:

*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.

This amendment narrows the bill down to the very proposition now made by the British Government. Details were avoided in the framing of the bill. Take these two amendments together, and they remove all the objections to the bill which have thus far been made.

Mr. RUSK. I was going to say that the bill proposes, in its present shape, only \$70,000 a year for a very important experiment, about which it is unnecessary for me to speak to the Senate. Every one can see that it is of great importance. With a reasonable probability of success in an enterprise of this description, calculated to produce such beneficial results, I should be willing to vote \$200,000.

I shall vote against the amendments proposed by the Senator from New York, because I apprehend no danger from the bill in its present shape.

As the papers which have been read show, this is an experiment. A portion of the ships of the United States are to be used in it. The British Government propose to furnish ships for laying down the cable; and we, I take it for granted, will do the same thing.

Mr. DOUGLAS. I regret that the Senator from Texas cannot vote for the amendments of the Senator from New York. If the amendments should be adopted, the proposition will be precisely what the Senator from Texas understands it to be without the amendments. What, then, is the objection to their adoption? As the bill now stands, it is liable to the objection which has been made of uncertainty as to the amount of our obligation.

For one, I am willing to agree to the proposition to pay a sum not exceeding \$70,000 a year for the services which this telegraphic company propose to render our Government under the circumstances; but I prefer to specify on the face of the bill the extent of our obligations.

Mr. SEWARD. I think, if the Senator from Texas will reconsider his opinion, he will find that we do not probably impair the probability of getting this great enterprise accomplished by adopting the amendments I have proposed. I wish to remark that the wire required to be laid down is already made. The whole enterprise has heretofore been conducted with American capital. On the 4th of July next, if this bill shall pass, there will be, for all practical purposes, an electric girdle around the world. All that is wanted is to pass this bill. All that this bill proposes is just what the British Government has agreed to do. It is proposed to use the vessels belonging to the United States Navy, and the British Government has agreed to lend vessels belonging to the British navy, for the purpose of laying the wire. The reason for this requisition is, that there is not, in the commercial marine of either country, such steam vessels as are adapted