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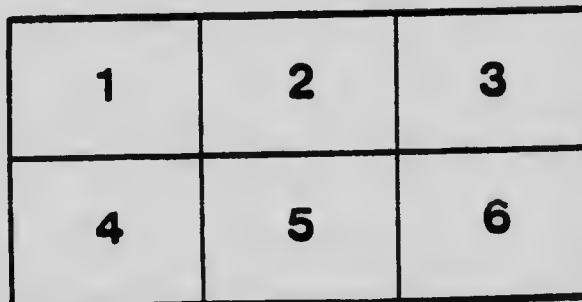
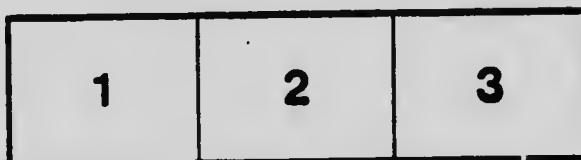
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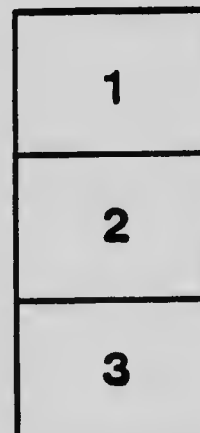
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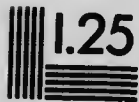
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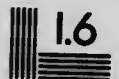
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The Empire-Girdling Cable

The
Empire-Girdling Cable



DELIVERANCE OF
THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF CANADA
AT THE GENERAL MEETING,
OTTAWA, MAY 18th, 1911

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The Empire-Girdling Cable.

On May 17th, 1911, the Royal Society of Canada placed on record its resolution, the deep interest felt by the members in the projected establishment of a world-encircling system of State-owned cables and telegraphs; and expressed the ardent hope for its early realization as a means of promoting the unification of the Empire.

On the following day (May 18th) the Royal Society, with entire unanimity adopted as its deliverance the following communication for transmission to the Coronation Conference now assembling in London.

A quarter of a century ago communications were exchanged between the Colonial Office, London, and the Government at Ottawa which shortly afterwards led to the projection of a scheme of the highest importance to the whole Empire.

The scheme was in part unfolded at the Imperial Conference of 1887, and at each succeeding Conference of representatives of the autonomous Dominions held in Ottawa and in London the subject was further considered and developed, the advantages to result from bringing into close telegraphic touch each one of the overseas British states and all with the Mother Country, became more and more apparent. The feeling in course of time became strengthened that all

should be within speaking distance and that they should become neighbours, as far as steam and electricity could effect that end.

Thus it was recognized that the great over-sea British Dominions should have the most facile means of intercourse, each to each, and all with the parent power to which they owe a common allegiance. In this spirit the project of a globe-girdling chain of electric cables under State control has been developed.

Circumstances, largely of a geographical character, have divided the project into two great divisions, each covering approximately half the circumference of the globe. The *first division* extends from England westerly and southerly to the antipodes of England. It crosses the Atlantic to Canada, embraces Canada from the extreme east to the extreme west, and then passes through the Pacific Ocean to New Zealand and Australia.

The *second division* is on the opposite side of the sphere, it begins with New Zealand and Australia, it extends across the Indian ocean to United South Africa, connecting by a branch with India, from South Africa it passes through the Atlantic to England probably by way of the West Indies or Nova Scotia and Newfoundland as may be determined.

It is now more than eight years since the initial cable of the *first division* was laid across the Pacific. This cable formed a direct telegraphic connection

between New Zealand, Australia and Canada. Since the beginning of November in 1902 it has ever since been in successful operation and the financial returns indicate a steady annual increase. By arrangement with the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, a copper wire has been placed along the line of railway through all the provinces from British Columbia to Quebec and the through telegraph business is transmitted under the direct control of the Pacific Cable Board. There only remains an Atlantic cable to be placed under the same control. Thus it appears that the first great division of the Empire-girdling chain, is within measurable distance of completion. We are however, brought nearer to, if not face to face with, a possible difficulty of a grave character. The difficulty is so serious that to neglect it or delay in providing a remedy, would be most unwise.

On the old telegraph route between England and Australasia by way of the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, it was found necessary to duplicate the cables. The object of this duplication being to provide against the delays resulting from breaks in a single cable. With this provision the second cable came into use wherever a break occurred, and the telegraph traffic was there thrown into the second cable until repairs were effected.

The Pacific Ocean is crossed by a single cable and experience goes to show that a break may occur without any warning whatever. Suppose a break occurred in that long section, 3,500 miles between Vancouver

and Fanning Island, or indeed, should a break occur anywhere or at any time on the Pacific Cable, telegraph intercourse would be interrupted between Australia, New Zealand and Canada for an indefinite period.

To ensure freedom from interruption a second cable should be provided. The second cable need not however be laid side by side with the first cable. The object to be gained could be much better effected in another way.

Taking advantage of the spheroidal form of the earth and the other conditions presented by the problem to be solved, there is every reason why the second cable should be provided by the establishment of the *second division* of the Globe-girdling chain; that is to say by the cables projected from Australasia to England by way of the Indian Ocean, South Africa and the Atlantic.

By the completion of the whole circle of the Globe-girdling scheme of state-owned cable, a vast strategic benefit would be achieved. Obviously if a breakdown were to interrupt telegraph transmission by one route, messages could be sent by means of the cable leading in the opposite direction until the broken cable could be restored.

Thus it will be seen that, with the complete Globe-girdling circle of State-owned cables established, we would find ourselves in possession of a duplicate scheme of submarine communications. Every single point in the circle would practically have two ways of

communication available, and it would be in the power of the Cable Board, in control of this gigantic enterprise, to send messages in an easterly or westerly direction as circumstances may require. The people in the British Dominions around the globe would be doubly united by two opposite means of State-owned communications. They would thus be in possession of a "cheap, certain, constant, convenient and universally acceptable system of telegraphy." Thus united with the motherland they would find themselves always within the circle of the world's activity.

On this most important branch of the subject, reference is made to pages 425-427 of the little book edited by the late Dr. George Johnson, "The Annals and Aims of the Pacific Cable Project." In the words of the Canadian poet:—

"Unite the Empire—make it stand compact,
Shoulder to shoulder let its members feel,
The touch of British brotherhood; and act
As one great Nation—strong and true as steel."

EXTRACTS FROM "ANNALS AND AIMS."

The problem presented is of the first importance, and the solution of it rests with the statesmen from the self-governing parts of the Empire, to be assembled at the Coronation Conference. It can undoubtedly be solved by following the same policy as that adopted in the establishment of the Pacific Cable, that is to say, by partnership arrangement in which all will unite for the common good.

Our common object is the freest intercourse, and this object can best be attained by linking together all the great outposts of the great Empire, precisely as Canada, New Zealand and

Australia are now brought into close relationship by means of the Pacific Cable. The Imperial Telegraph System will embrace in its circuit round the Globe, three great oceans, the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Indian Ocean. The immediate object is to traverse these oceans and the intervening territories by a continuous chain of nationalized cable telegraphs. This, the crowning achievement, will cost in round figures, £4,000,000, more or less, an insignificant expenditure of capital in view of the immensely important results to be attained. It would do more for the Empire as a whole than twenty times the amount spent in any other way whatever. It would set at rest many difficulties. It would place the telegraph service of the Empire on a secure and satisfactory basis, and render alienation of the leading cables impossible. It would be a fresh tie between all the over-sea Dominions and the Motherland of great practical utility; it would minimize transmission charges and prodigiously increase the volume of telegraphic intercourse; it would benefit trade, vitalize the spirit of patriotism and strengthen the sentiment which constitute the most enduring foundation on which the Empire of the future can be built up. The circumstances are such, and the benefits so many and so great, that whatever the cost, the pan-Britannic telegraph service should, as speedily as possible be carried to completion.

The establishment of such a service would affect the existing companies. The national telegraph encircling the globe would become the main or trunk line of communication between the self-governing portions of the Empire. The existing private cables would, to a large extent, and in many instances assume the position of branches to the trunk line, and as such would find employment in general and especially in international traffic. The charges for transmission by the trunk line would be lowered to a minimum, so as merely to cover cost of operating, interest and maintenance, and as a consequence, the business would be immensely increased. The private companies would gain by the increase, and likewise by the reduced charges on the main line, as they would thus be supplied with much profitable business for general dissemination.

The private cables were for the most part established with commendable enterprise many years ago. They received generous Government assistance. They have done useful pioneer work and this work has already yielded to the enterprising investors rich returns. The time has come, however, when circumstances demand a change. It has become a matter

of public expediency that the State should control an unbroken line of telegraph established for the safety and well being of the Empire. It is possible, therefore, that the companies may have to rest content with more moderate gains than hitherto, at least until there be a new development of business under the changed condition. That a development of telegraph business beyond all ordinary conception will result from the establishment of the Imperial service there can be no doubt whatever.

In the event of a determination being reached to complete the Imperial telegraph service, before proceeding to lay a State cable across the Indian Ocean, the private company now owning it should be given the option to transfer, at a fair price, the private cable recently laid by them between Australia and South Africa. And arrangements should likewise be made to connect the Cape with the United Kingdom by a State-owned cable and India East and West should be brought within the range of the Imperial cable girdle. These, with the Pacific Cable, will complete the Globe-encircling telegraph line designed to link together the Transmarine home lands of the British people on the five continents. It will prove an Imperial service in every sense. It will greatly promote the commercial and industrial well-being of all the parts. It will strengthen their relationship, and enable the whole fabric the better to withstand any stress or strain which the future may bring.

There is a rapidly growing desire on the part of the British people, everywhere, to strengthen the ties and multiply the links which unite the Mother nation with the daughter states. This feeling of attachment prevails in Australia and in New Zealand. It is especially marked in Canada, and we are warranted in expressing the foregoing views on behalf of like minded Canadians. Their name is legion and they are prompted only by one spirit. Their ardent desire is to join cordially and actively in building up the Empire on an enduring basis, that it may long continue to confer benefits on the human race.

