

Before leaving this part of the subject, I should perhaps make some reference to the question whether the ocean route to Canada is not attended with more difficulties from fog and icebergs than that to New York.

Your Lordship will be aware that this matter has been much discussed in a somewhat controversial spirit, and there would be little advantage in my attempting to enter into the details of it in this report. I may, however, remark that thick fogs occur on the New York route, even in the height of summer, but that the fast steamers, relying on the frequent use of the foghorn to warn other vessels, and the temperature of the water to indicate the vicinity of icebergs, do not materially slacken speed on that account. Any delay on account of fog would be more than counterbalanced by the comparative shortness of the open sea route. It counts for much as a practical fact that the Allan steamers have an excellent record for safety and punctuality, and the natural difficulties, it may be inferred, are not of such a dangerous character as to forbid the carrying out of this scheme.

499. III.—THE PACIFIC CABLE.

Five resolutions were passed by the Conference on this subject, viz. :—

(1.) "That, in the opinion of this Conference, immediate steps should be taken to provide telegraphic communications by cable, free from foreign control, between the Dominion of Canada and Australasia.

(2.) "That the Imperial Government be respectfully requested to undertake at the earliest possible moment, and to prosecute with all possible speed, a thorough survey of the proposed cable route between Canada and Australia; the expense to be borne in equal proportions by Great Britain, Canada, and the Australasian Colonies.

(3.) "That it is for the interest of the Empire that, in case of the construction of a cable between Canada and Australasia, such a cable should be extended from Australia to the Cape of Good Hope; and that, for that purpose, arrangements should be made between the Imperial and South African Governments for a survey of the latter route.

(4.) "That, in view of the desirability of having a choice of routes for a cable connection between Canada and Australasia, the Home Government be requested to take immediate steps to secure neutral landing-ground on some one of the Hawaiian Islands, in order that the cable may remain permanently under British control.

(5.) "That the Canadian Government be requested after the rising of the Conference to make all necessary enquiries, and generally to take such steps as may be expedient in order to ascertain the cost of the proposed Pacific cable, and promote the establishment of the undertaking in accordance with the views expressed in this Conference."

It will be observed that these resolutions are of a somewhat general character, and that the Conference did not commit itself to any definite opinion on the numerous questions that arise as soon as the principle of the desirability of the cable has been admitted. This, no doubt, appears unsatisfactory from the point of view of those who desire to see the solution of the question advanced with rapidity and certainty; but, while some individual views were put forward with much force and clearness, the general feeling was that, as the Conference was merely a consultative body, it was undesir-