

"To be sure it will be necessary to select a type of cable which combines great strength with light weight, but there is no difficulty in this either, as it has been possible to construct cables for the Atlantic which will carry 7,000 fathoms of their own length before they break.

"It may, therefore, be taken for granted that any technical obstacles which were apprehended in 1887 have now been overcome, and that the cable can be laid as soon as the financial question has been settled."

Her Majesty's Government will, I presume, consult their professional advisers on this point. The question was raised whether it would not be proper for the Conference to endeavour to settle the route which the cable should follow. From one point of view it may seem unreasonable to ask that the route should be surveyed without suggesting what that route should be. Several routes touching at different islands in the Pacific were before the Conference. As a general indication of their direction I will take two as types.

One route would be from Vancouver Island to Fanning Island, Fiji, Norfolk Island to Tweedmouth in Australia. This is a distance of 6,730 miles, and if a branch is made to connect it with New Zealand, 415 miles would have to be added. This route is entirely through British territory.

The second route is from Vancouver Island to an island in the Hawaiian group, thence through the Gilbert and Solomon Islands to Bowen in Queensland. This route is about 6,300 miles.

But upon the whole it was felt that the balance of convenience was in favour of leaving these questions to stand over for future consideration. They appeared to depend largely on circumstances requiring expert information and advice, and the delegates thought it best to await any views or recommendations which Her Majesty's Government, with the valuable professional assistance at their command, may in due course be able to offer.

In connection with this matter the fourth resolution may be noted. It was the decided wish of the Conference that the cable should, if possible, pass entirely through British territory whenever it touches the islands on the route. It was believed that the practical exigencies of the case, from an engineering point of view, might render it desirable that the cable should run from Vancouver to the Sandwich Islands, as this stretch is materially shorter than that to Fanning Island. In that case it would be desirable, if possible, that the exclusive use of one of the Hawaiian Islands should be obtained, in order that the cable might be as far as possible free from foreign control.

Necker Island, which lies about 400 miles from Honolulu, has been much mentioned as a possible landing-stage, but it does not appear to be suitable for that purpose. Captain King in his report of last May to the Hawaiian Government stated "there was no water, no trees, no grass; to support life, supplies would have to be brought to the island, including water, and the station there would be similar to that of a lighthouse." Possibly some more suitable island might be found on the edge of the Hawaiian Archipelago.

The Conference was not, of course, in a position to arrive at any conclusion as to whether such an arrangement as that desired was practicable, but there was an impression that the Hawaiian Government was disposed to assist the project so as to secure for themselves the convenience of having cable connection with the rest of the world.