

For the great purpose of advancing Imperial unity, she has proposed substantial pledges.

The special conditions of the Australasian Colonies^a have not enabled them to act so decisively. And yet on their action must depend the future of these proposals.

The Pacific cable and the steamship proposals aim at completing the Imperial girdle, with the consequent development of internal resources, by the inclusion of Australasia. Therefore the support given or withheld by her Governments must make or mar these schemes.

The assistance required from Her Majesty's Government towards the steamship communication can be easily rendered in the manner I have already suggested by means of mail poundage and without any more direct subvention than what is already paid by the Admiralty for the control, in case of war, of fast steamers.

The question of a Pacific cable is somewhat different, for in this case a guarantee or subsidy is required, and it may be held by some that the return to Great Britain is not sufficiently apparent. The exact amount cannot be stated, and further negotiations must take place after the questions dealing with route, survey, and probable cost, have been settled.

I must, however, repeat that an alternate line of communication with Australasia and the Pacific should have strategic as well as commercial advantages. At a probably small annual cost Great Britain would be in a position to warn distant parts of her Empire in case of danger, and would at the same time be extending advantages to a commerce with which she is intimately connected.

In weighing matters of combined Imperial importance it is impossible to define the exact proportion of advantage which will accrue to each country or colony. To attempt to do so would result in failure to carry out any Imperial scheme. If such a scheme is found to be based on sound and practical grounds, then it should be supported as likely to advance the interests of the Empire as a whole.

The success of commerce in any part of the Empire must have beneficial effects on this country.

I am impressed with the belief that the three proposals of the Ottawa Conference are sound, practical, and full of great Imperial advantages.

Commerce cannot be based on sentiment alone, but it is possible to clear away the snags and obstacles which may divert its streams into new regions. The Mother Country is asked to help in keeping clear the channels between her Colonies and herself, so that the flow of trade may be increased and the feeling of kinship uninterrupted. Never, perhaps, in our Empire's history has such an opportunity presented itself. The "passionate sentiment" of Canada, as Sir John Thompson so well described it, and the hopeful attachment of the growing Colonies of Australasia and the Cape, turn eagerly at this time to the Mother Country for some sign of her regard for their development.

Their leading statesmen appreciate the value of the connection with Great Britain, and the bulk of their population is loyal. It is within the power of Great Britain to settle the direction of their trade and the current of their sentiments for, it may be, generations. Such an opportunity may not soon recur, as the sands of time run down quickly. There is an im-