

WEDNESDAY, 10 DECEMBER, 1856.

Present :

Mr COWPER,
Mr. IRVING,Mr. MACARTHUR,
Mr. PARKES.

HENRY PARKES, ESQUIRE, IN THE CHAIR.

J. Thompson,
Esq.

John Thompson, Esq., Deputy Surveyor General, called in and examined.

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1. *By the Chairman*: This Committee has been appointed to consider the subject of communication in the Australian Colonies by Electric Telegraph, more particularly in reference to the steps taken already in constructing that means of communication in Victoria. The inquiry hitherto has been confined exclusively to the advisability of connecting Sydney with one or more remote points of our own Colony, and with the Colony of Victoria, with a view to a complete system of communication with the Colonies of South Australia and Tasmania. I believe the subject has occupied your attention for some years past? It has.
2. In a more enlarged degree,—you view taking in the ultimate connexion of Europe with the Australian Colonies by means of the Electric Telegraph? Yes.
3. Will you have the kindness to state to the Committee your opinions, in the first place, as to the desirability of at once constructing an Electric Telegraph so as to unite this Colony with Victoria, and bring it within the system of communication intended to unite the three Colonies of Victoria, Tasmania, and South Australia? I think there can be no doubt of the advisability of that.
4. Supposing we have documents before us, and evidence given by witnesses in this room, that the three Colonies of Victoria, Tasmania, and South Australia, will be united within a short time, in all probability by this means, and supposing that New South Wales should be left out of the system—do you think we should suffer serious disadvantage by being so omitted? I should think so, decidedly.
5. You have not thought particularly on that branch of the subject? No; I have not given my attention particularly to the communication between the Colonies.
6. It appears to you self-evident, that if the other Colonies were united by this means of improved communication, it would become absolutely necessary for us to be taken into the system, or else we should be serious sufferers? Certainly. I think Telegraphic communication between Sydney and Melbourne is indispensable and of the first importance.
7. Will you have the kindness to state connectedly what your views are about constructing an Electric Telegraph by way of the Gulf of Carpentaria, I believe, so as to unite these Colonies with Europe? In the first place, I think it proper to observe, that we ought to take Brisbane into consideration in our colonial arrangements, so that the northern part of the Colony may have the advantage of communication with South Australia and Victoria too.
8. Are you of opinion that that is immediately necessary? It appears to me to be as necessary as the communication with South Australia.
9. That would be carried out, not by any effort of our own, but by the Government of Victoria and South Australia—if we become united with Victoria we also become united with South Australia, without any effort of our own? Yes, so I understand; the only outlay at present will be for the line between Sydney and Albany.
10. Does it not occur to you that the construction of a line of Telegraphic communication with the capital of the new northern Colony might be deferred as a secondary consideration until our communication is established with more densely populated communities? Undoubtedly, but I do not think it should be entirely lost sight of.
11. Will you state your views with regard to extended communication with India and Europe? The Committee will perhaps be aware that there is a Company established in England which is called "The Mediterranean Electric Telegraph Company from London to Bombay, and from thence *via* Calcutta to Australia," with a view to the extension of that means of communication to Australia, and that they purpose carrying the line to Sydney. It appeared to me that, with that knowledge, the Committee could not overlook the circumstance, that in a few years we should be able to have electric communication with London, and that we might ourselves facilitate the establishment of that means of communication. For instance, the East India Company propose to give £30,000 per annum for the use of the Telegraph, and France and Sardinia have each guaranteed five per cent. on the outlay for that portion of the line which passes through their respective territories; and it would be possible, I think, for the four Colonies, namely, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, and South Australia, to do so likewise, or, by united effort, to carry the Electric Telegraph to Port Essington, so soon as the progress in India has brought the line as far as Singapore.
12. Do you mean, to carry the communication from the Australian Colonies so as to meet the communication over India, at Singapore, by the time the line is completed to that place? Yes, just so; but there must be some concert between the Company and between the Indian Government and this Colony, if we should commence before their line is completed to Singapore. The Dutch Government having possession of Java, and Batavia being a very considerable town, they would, no doubt, assist in carrying on the line from Singapore to Batavia.
13. What is the route you propose? The route I propose is a direct overland line from Port Essington. The Company propose a sub-marine line by way of Borneo and Celebes to Port Essington, and thence across the Gulf of Carpentaria and the York Peninsula and down our east coast to Sydney; but I am of opinion that a sub-marine line when you can have an overland one would be very objectionable. Any accident happening to a sub-marine telegraph cable could not be easily repaired, and would probably stop the communication for months, which would be very mischievous and embarrassing when constant communication had once been established.

14. *By Mr. Macarthur:* Would it be practicable to maintain a line of Telegraphic communication over a large extent of unoccupied country—Is it not in the first place necessary that the country should be settled, or large portions of it, at all events? That of course is a matter for consideration; but I think an overland route is far preferable to the submarine route which the Company propose. In fact they have already, I believe, abandoned the idea of an extensive sub-marine arrangement in Asia. They had some notion of carrying the line from Suez down the Red Sea to Aden, and along the shores of Arabia and Persia to Bombay; but now they think of continuing the line from Constantinople through Asia Minor, and down the valley of the Euphrates, and so to Kurrachee, where it would meet the Indian line.
15. Looking at the settlement of the country between Moreton Bay and Sydney within a very recent period, do you not think there is a strong probability that the country to the northward between this and Cape York, or the Gulf of Carpentaria, or even Port Essington, may, within a moderate period, also be settled? There can be very little doubt about that, and the establishment of the Electric Telegraph would go far towards the opening of the country to such settlement.
16. As far as we know anything of the country between our farthest northern settlements at present and Cape York, we have reason to believe that it is, generally speaking, well adapted to grazing purposes? Yes.
17. That there is a great extent of grazing country? Yes, there is a great extent of fine country.
18. With a salubrious and comparatively temperate climate? Yes, considering the latitude.
19. A great deal of it is on a table land of considerable elevation? Yes; but that tract of country would be far removed from the line of Telegraph to Port Essington.
20. *By the Chairman:* I do not think you have yet indicated the particular points that you would connect in a line of communication by Singapore? It would be by the East Indian islands.
21. Will you indicate the particular localities, if you have so far matured your views? From Singapore the line will cross to Sumatra, by a small extent of sub-marine wire; following Sumatra it would then cross to Java—
22. Have you ascertained the distances? No, not exactly.
23. Where would you propose that the line should cross to Java from Sumatra? They are so very near each other, not above twenty miles or so apart, that I scarcely thought it worth while to consider that point.
24. There is no particular point of the Straits of Sunda where you would cross? No; I did not look to that at all. The line would then go to Batavia, and follow the line of the islands, the principal ones being Bali, Lombok, Lumbarra, Flores, and Timor.
25. That would involve several sub-marine connections? Yes, of course.
26. What is the distance from Timor to Port Essington? About three hundred miles. I beg to hand in a copy of my pamphlet on this subject, which will be found to contain more of the details. (*The witness handed in the same. Vide Appendix A*)
27. Have you made any calculation from any data as to the sum that would be required to construct this line to Port Essington? I have; but I would state to the Committee, previous to mentioning the calculations, that I was led to do so by looking at the expense of our present mail steamer communication; the amount being so large it appeared to me we could have the Electric Telegraph established from here to Port Essington for a similar annual outlay. Of course the estimates I have made are but rough, and may be very erroneous.
28. *By Mr. Irving:* Do you consider that line preferable to one from South Australia to India? You could not very well carry an Electric Telegraph from South Australia to India.
29. The distance would be too great for a sub-marine line? Yes. The great advantage of the line by Port Essington would be, that with the exception of a few small bits of sub-marine telegraph, to connect the East India islands, there is dry land all the way from London to Sydney and Melbourne, excepting the Straits of Dover and the Bosphorus. I beg to hand in a rough estimate which I have made of the cost of constructing this line from Sydney to Port Essington. (*The witness handed in the same. Vide Appendix B.*) The total annual cost, you will perceive, is £55,000; and if that sum were divided between the four colonies, it would be something more than £13,000 each; but of course it would require to be proportioned according to the population and circumstances of each Colony. At the present moment we are paying £22,000 a year for the steam mail communication, and Victoria pays £73,000, the whole cost, including what is paid by the British Government, being £190,000 per annum.
30. *By the Chairman:* You do not take it for granted that the Electric Telegraph would supersede the necessity of communication by means of steamers? It would not altogether; but I think, as far as postal communication goes, it would almost do away with the necessity for a subsidy.
31. It appears to me to be an unfair calculation, to set the cost of the Electric Telegraph against the cost of the steamers; because the Telegraph, however beneficial in itself, would in no material degree lessen the usefulness of the mail steamers; we should require them just the same? I should be rather disposed to question that.
32. Do I understand that you are of opinion that communication by fast vessels would not be particularly necessary, if we had electric communication? Yes; I am of opinion that, as far as mere postal communication is concerned, we should not then be compelled to seek to secure such great speed by heavy subsidy.
33. Do you think the imperfect messages conveyed by the electric wire would answer all the purposes of the numerous letters we receive and send by the present postal communication, so as to throw us, for our ordinary correspondence, on the sailing ships? I look to see the means of communication by the Electric Telegraph advance as rapidly as steam printing has done, so that all matters of any moment will be easily communicated. I consider that until

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very long lines are established—such, for instance, as this between the Antipodes—the full power of the Electric Telegraph will not be brought to light; its importance will be found to increase with the distance. But to return to your question;—you would have steamers, no doubt, but there would be no necessity to pay for them.

34. There would be no necessity to subsidise them? Just so.

35. If a subsidy is necessary now to the existence of a line of steam communication, should we have it at all if that subsidy were withdrawn? Yes, you would have steamers of a certain class; they might not, perhaps, be quite so swift or so regular as they would be if subsidised; but it is scarcely possible to say. There is a growing impression in England, that the plan of subsidising companies for maintaining postal communication must give way to open competition.

36. My object is to ascertain from you whether, on reflection, you are not of opinion that the question of communication by Electric Telegraph should be considered by itself, independently of all other means of communication? Yes, certainly it should. I merely put this estimate forward to show that the cost of the Electric Telegraph would not be so great, considering the advantage it would be; that, indeed, it might be less, than we are paying for steam communication; the main object of which, I take it, is the rapid communication of bare facts: now this can be done more rapidly by the electric wire, and just as well.

37. Have you made any calculation at all as to whether the traffic along this line, if established, would be sufficient to pay its current expenses? I had no means of doing that, nor have I so far entered into the question; though I did contemplate communicating with Major Christie, the Postmaster General, and seeing what the postal revenue, including India, was likely to be. I have no doubt that if the Company were to complete their line all through from England to Australia, it would be the best paying Company in the world; I should think the profits would be enormous.

38. Then if you could decide the matter, you would have the Australian Colonies commence at once the construction of a line of Electric Telegraph to Singapore? No, not just yet; but I think the matter should be considered of seriously.

39. Have you ever fixed any date in the future when you think it should be commenced or completed? I think in the course of the next three or four years, or say five years, the Electric Telegraph will be continued as far as Singapore.

40. That is from Europe? Yes. At present it is completed throughout India; and the line from London to Constantinople is completed; and a celebrated Engineer (Mr. Stephenson) has, I believe, gone to Syria, for the purpose of seeing about the construction of a line of railway from Constantinople, through Asia Minor, and down the valley of the Euphrates, which would no doubt be preceded by the Electric Telegraph. What I thought was, that the Committee, in entering on the subject of connecting the Colonies by Electric Telegraph, should not altogether lose sight of the probability, that in a few years the question of its extension to Europe must be entertained.

41. It hardly appears that anything could be done immediately on the subject? No, excepting the line was continued to Brisbane; then the eventual extension to Port Essington might be cared for.

42. *By Mr. Macarthur:* You would not recommend that it should be commenced before the line to Albury? Oh no; I merely intended that the matter should be under consideration by the Committee. We must await the completion of the Indian lines as far as Singapore, and also see what the Telegraph Company is likely to do.

43. *By the Chairman:* If any additional information that might be of value to the Committee should occur to you, perhaps you will be good enough to add it to your evidence? Availing myself of this permission, I beg to add, that it would perhaps be advisable for the Government to communicate at once with the Mediterranean Electric Telegraph Company, and invite them to say what their views are as to the connection with Australia; to offer them a subsidy, or a per-centage on outlay, or any other assistance. I think too that we should communicate with the authorities in India, as to the probability of their extending their lines to Rangoon and Singapore. The Government of the Netherlands might also be consulted, as to the extension from Singapore to the town of Batavia, and through Java to any of the other Islands in their possession. Further, I may remark, that it would appear, from a conversation that took place in the House of Commons, on the 22nd May last, (when Lord Stanley asked if the Indian Government were taking any steps to facilitate the establishment of the Electric Telegraph between England and India, and he was replied to in the affirmative, and that the Indian Government were taking the most lively interest in the several schemes), that we may look to see the line between London and Calcutta very soon in action.

APPENDIX A.

Electric Telegraphs and Railways between Sydney and London not impossible.

NOTE:—The suggestions thrown out in the following papers appear to have been lost sight of; at least, neither the press or the public have taken any interest in the matter, whilst the great American scheme, the Pacific Railroad, and which is not at all so feasible, nor yet, perhaps, so easy of accomplishment, or so likely to be generally beneficial, is constantly before the public in some shape. In the hope, therefore, that a project in which not only Australia but the whole of the Eastern world is so greatly interested, may be brought more prominently under notice, these papers have been hurriedly, and without revision, put together. The Fourth Paper brings the subject up to the present day, and those which precede it must be regarded as suggestive merely, for indeed the prospect of even the partial accomplishment of so vast a project is very remote.

PART I.

PRACTICAL.

The contemplated establishment (see late English journals) of an overland route from London to Bombay—or at least to the head of the Persian Gulf,—by way of Vienna and Constantinople,—thence through Asia Minor, and Syria, and down the valley of the Euphrates, is a project of vast moment to the Australian Colonies;—it is nothing less than the commencement of arrangements, which may eventually connect the cities of London and Sydney, by means of the Electric Telegraph, and even by railway.

If one of the minor Presidencies of India, viz., Bombay, is to be connected, as far as possible, by an overland route, with England, how far more probable is it, that Lahore, when it shall have become the capital of the British Empire in the East, will also be reached by a direct overland route rather than by the extraordinary round by sea and land, the present course.

But an overland route to India is not all that is talked of in the London journals. Of the extension of the Electric Telegraph to India it is said that “there is nothing in the proposal that does not appear feasible; nor would it be necessary to wait for the Great Oriental Railway;” so that the connection of Great Britain with India, by no less than three distinct means, is now in contemplation in England, viz.:—by overland route without railway—by railway—and by Electric Telegraph.

Already it has been determined to connect together, by means of the Telegraph, all the principal cities of India, viz.:—Bombay, Agra, Delhi, Lahore, Calcutta, and Rangoon; the lines for these connections have absolutely been decided on, and the expense estimated at £150,000.

As the Electric Telegraph has been already extended from London to Vienna, there can be little doubt that it will soon reach Constantinople, and that it would then follow the contemplated overland route to Bombay, or that to Lahore, where it would meet, perhaps, a line already established through Delhi and Agra to Calcutta.

If then, a line of Electric Telegraphs could be successfully established between London and Calcutta, that would show the possibility of a still further extension to Rangoon and so through the Birman Empire and Malacca to Singapore, so as to quicken the intercourse between England and the Colonies in the Eastern Archipelago, as well as with China and Australia. Thus far—that is between London and Singapore—these air drawn Telegraphs would be confined to dry land, with the exception of the Straits of Dover and the Bosphorus.

When it is considered, that the project for the establishment of an Electric Telegraph between London and New York, is seriously thought of, although the sea distance is 1,600 miles, and the expense estimated at three millions of dollars; the connection of Singapore with the coast of the Australian continent at Port Essington, by a series of sub-marine Telegraphs, between the line of islands, viz., Sumatra, Java, Lombok, Lumbarra, Flores, and Timor, would be comparatively an easy work,* and from Port Essington the electric wires would easily find their way to Sydney, through the north-western interior, and thus the great desideratum of a rapid communication between England and Australia would be accomplished.

The most important of all considerations connected with the subject of Australian progress, is this, of speedy intercourse with the old world. But a matter of far greater moment, is the consideration of the possibility of railway communication, to a greater or lesser extent, between the Australian Colonies and Great Britain. Already a railway is in action between Bombay and Calcutta—and a railway from Calcutta to Lahore has been commenced at Calcutta. Should it ever reach Lahore, who can doubt that it might be extended, to Europe on the one side, and to Singapore on the other; whence steam to Port Essington would reach a railway from that place across the Australian continent to Sydney and Melbourne; and the intercourse between the Antipodean Cities would be accomplished with magic celerity.

The gigantic American project, for the continuation of the Railway between New York and the Mississippi to California, is a matter seriously thought of. If, therefore, such an undertaking as that is feasible, and if it would be advantageous to America, even in the present state of California, how far more desirable would it be to Great Britain, to connect her imperial capital—London—with the capital of her Eastern empire—Lahore—and finally with the capital of the Australian empire—Sydney. What the Rocky Mountains are to the American project, the mountainous country of Kabul (if the line by Lahore be followed) may prove to the schemes hereby contemplated; but the physical difficulties would

*When cased in Gutta Percha, the bottom of the sea is found to be the best resting place for the electric wires; and so too in traversing desert districts, the wires can be buried a few feet below the surface.

would be of far less consequence, it is feared, than the moral difficulties. British capital, and British science and skill, might overcome the physical obstacles, but the moral obstacles may be found far more ungovernable. The maintenance of the stations which either the Electric Telegraph or the Railway would require, amongst the wild tribes and people of Asia, throughout the whole of the route intervening between Constantinople and Singapore, with the exception, perhaps, of the Hindoos, presents great difficulties; and these suggestions therefore are not thrown out without some misgivings. Still, the commencement of Electric Telegraphs and Railways in India, and the network of Railways promised by Mr. Rothschild in Syria, do afford some promise for the completion of these mighty projects for "annihilating time and space," and which would contribute more to the advancement of intelligence, and the civilization of the whole world, than anything which has hitherto been contemplated. Whilst all the doings of Asia were brought under the review of the European public—the people of Europe would be distributed all over the East, carrying with them the ameliorating influence of their advancement. England can never recede from the position which she has taken in the East, and whether she be called upon to suppress piracy in the Indian Archipelago—to correct Chinese impertinence—or to protect her Australian Colonies, the railway offers facilities far more valuable than a thousand steamers. Supposing even that the jealousy of the European States should prevent Great Britain from travelling *by rail*, or *talking by wire*, through Europe, it would be well worth her while to attempt, by a treaty with Turkey, the subjection of the petty eastern nations which are in the way, and after steaming to Constantinople or Beyrout, take on the rail to Singapore; for besides the political advantages that would result to Great Britain from a railway through Asia, her manufactures of every sort, from velvet to lucifer matches, would be spread over that continent to an extent which would greatly advance her prosperity, and assist in feeding her people at home.

The bare possibility of travelling from Sydney to London by rail, and viewing all the great cities of Asia and Europe; viz.:—Singapore, Calcutta, Benares, Agra, Delhi, Lahore, Cabul, Ispahan, Bagdad, Antioch, Aleppo, Constantinople, Belgrade, Pesth, Vienna, and finally Paris, is more like a dream than a project likely to be realised; but if the geography of the old world be studied, the feasibilities of all that is now suggested become evident, and it will be found that the establishment of railways between London and Sydney is not impossible, any more than that the electric wire should, in the course of a few days, reveal to Sydney all the news of Europe and Asia. Already New York and Cincinnati are connected, over boundless forests, wide, deep, and numerous rivers, and lofty mountains. New York and New Orleans are also connected, and it can never be but that all the great cities of the old world will shortly be connected by the magic Telegraph like those of the New, and then the extension to Sydney must follow.

PART II. FINANCIAL.

In part the first the practicability of establishing an Electric Telegraph, and even a Railway, between Sydney and London was demonstrated from many pregnant circumstances—principally that electric telegraphs and railways are already in progress in India—that Baron Rothschild contemplates a network of railways in Syria—that a grand Oriental railway and Telegraph between London and Calcutta are spoken of, besides overland routes to India—and that, in time, the extension of the Telegraph and rail to Singapore, and to the Australian Colonies, can scarcely be doubted. The ways and means by which this project could be accomplished have now to be considered.

The finance of a scheme which is to connect the antipodes can scarcely be brought within rule, nor are there any readily accessible data here on which to found calculations; and even if there were, statements of outlay and profit, save of the rudest character, would be quite out of the question; besides, there are so many contingencies arising from the circumstance of the lines passing through different countries with different interests, that all that can be done is to shadow forth the probable means of bringing about the arrangements in question.

The Continental Powers will, no doubt, continue the line of rail (which already extends as far as Vienna) to Constantinople—Baron Rothschild will continue the line from Constantinople through Syria, to Alexandria—then the British Government, or a Grand Oriental Railway Company, would continue the line to Lahore—the lines through India are in the hands of the East India Company, and they, with some aid perhaps from the Government, would continue the line to Singapore—through the Indian Archipelago, where some screw steaming would be required, the interests of Great Britain would lead perhaps to the offer of facilities to some English company, or it might be combined with the portion of the line which passes through and pertains particularly to Australia—but the portion of the work strictly Australian, viz., from Port Essington to Sydney and Melbourne, as it would have the least traffic of any part of the line, and consequently be the least profitable, calls for extraordinary means to effect it. Still, the raising of a sufficient capital, immense as it must needs be, does not appear altogether impossible; let but the real practicability of the project be ascertained, and its utility become generally evident; let but the prospective intercourse with Great Britain be made as sure, and easy of accomplishment, as if it were possible, by the aid of an Aladdin's lamp, to transport the continent of Australia from the Pacific to the Atlantic, and every bit of Australia's waste lands—some thousand millions of acres—would be worth, not £1 per acre (the present monopoly price) but £10 or £20, or more. Were the British Government, therefore—instead of giving it away in bits as it may be demanded by the Legislatures of the different Colonies—to devote these waste lands of the Australian continent to meet the outlay required for the Australian portion of the line, any amount of capital, under a system of remission, could, in all probability, be procured. Suppose that a company were proposed upon the principle that for every pound sterling of capital invested therein there should issue a remission ticket, receivable by the Colonial Treasurers of any of the

the Australian Colonies as payment for waste lands submitted for sale by auction under the existing Acts of Parliament, then, although doubts might be thrown over the possibility of obtaining a return for such an immense expenditure as the Telegraph and Railway would require, yet, as the subscribers would, at the least, receive some equivalent for their money, in the shape of waste land, there would be no hesitation on the part of English capitalists to invest in the stock of such a company—it would be purchasing waste land to be rendered valuable by the very means to which the investment would be applied, over and above the chances of obtaining eventually a money interest from the Railway and Telegraph. And so long as the auction system was maintained, no confusion or difficulty could, by any possibility arise. The nearer the Railway connecting the antipodes grew to completion the more valuable the lands purchased by the remissions would become. It just amounts to this—Is the continent of Australia worth anything? If it is, why give it away? Why not apply it to the making of a portion of this grand Antipodean Highway.

Having thus reviewed the ways and means of carrying it out by piecemeal, it is worthy of consideration whether the line in its whole extent should not be regarded rather as a great national work, to be undertaken by the Nation itself, or by a National Company, such as that by which India is still in some measure ruled. In order to arrive at some notion of what would be required of such a Company in the way of expenditure, some rude calculations have been made. Supposing that Vienna, to which railways already extend, were taken as the starting point, the distance to Sydney would be about twelve thousand miles—then, considering that the outlay for land (so large an item in the English Railway expense) would be but trifling in Asia, £10,000 per mile would perhaps be an ample estimate (the Madras line is estimated at £5,000 only), the total expense, therefore, would, at that rate, be 120 millions of pounds sterling, just half the expenditure already incurred for railways in Great Britain, viz., 240 millions. Now the expenditure of even the half of such a sum upon this contemplated antipodean Railway would do more, perhaps, for Great Britain than the expenditure of the whole 240 millions within her own bounds has effected for her. In the other point of view, viz., piecemeal, the expense would be greatly reduced; for, supposing that railways were in progress by foreign powers to reach as far as Syria, or that we had to start from Beyrout to avoid the jealousy of the European Nations, the distance from Beyrout or any other point in Syria to Lahore or Bombay would be about 2,000 miles; then, leaving the Indian line to the Company, we come to Calcutta, from whence to Singapore is another 2,000 miles, whilst the distance from Port Essington to Sydney may be taken as another 2,000 miles—making in all 6,000 miles, which, at £10,000 per mile (perhaps this latter could be done for £5,000), would be 60 millions, one quarter only of what has already been spent in England. To arrive at any conclusions as to the expense of the Electric Telegraph is not very possible, but looking roughly at the estimated cost—£150,000—of the network of Telegraphs which is to overrun India, it might, perhaps, take a million of money.

Some new and glorious speculation is required to employ the teeming capital of England. It could not be more safely invested than in land. Great Britain possesses immense, unlimited tracts of waste land, only worthless because not readily accessible. Railways would make them accessible and valuable, and consequently saleable; and the Government, as trustee for the Nation, would be fully justified in devoting the national waste lands to the bringing about of a result which would be strictly National, and productive of the greatest National benefit. The waste lands—the real, the only true source of wealth*—have been *thrown away*, have been given to companies with a view to foster emigration and commerce; but if, instead of to such companies, the waste lands were given to railway companies, or, in any other way applied to railways, the purposes of emigration would be far more effectually served, and the commerce of the country would be much more extended.

The greater part of the line has been, for hundreds of years, the principal course of traffic between Europe and Asia, the source of immense profit to the commercial world, and its extension to Australia would open out new channels equally profitable and beneficial. Extending so centrically, east and west, through the very heart of Europe, Asia, and Australia, the line would draw to it, from the north and south, all the commerce, all the emigration and travelling, and all the postal business of the Old World.

PART III.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL.

Of the former papers on this subject, the first touches upon the *probabilities and possibilities*; whilst the second has reference to the *ways and means*;—the *social and political* considerations have now to be dealt with.

The occupation of waste lands by the impoverished but industriously disposed inhabitants of old countries, must follow upon the introduction of facilities for deportation. Emigration, therefore, would be one of the great objects of the railway, and one of the chief sources of profit, and, even supposing that emigration from Great Britain should, by the time that the railway was in action, have declined, in consequence of an increase in the means of employment of her pauper poor, (notwithstanding the addition of a thousand a day to her population,) still a railway would offer irresistible temptations to the oppressed and starving populations of Europe and Asia; millions of people would be poured into Australia—a mighty revolution would be effected—Australia would become another America.

But, besides the emigration, the mere amount of travelling that would be created by a means of communication—so rapid, so safe, would be immense:—every wealthy inhabitant of

of Europe and of America would visit Asia and Australia, and *vice versa*: artists, lecturers, actors, authors, missionaries, the enterprising of all trades and professions would be on the move, either to collect materials for their works, or to submit them to new communities; the Mahomedan and Pagan religions of the East would be eventually swept away; darkness and ignorance would vanish before the enlightenment and literature of Europe. But it is vain to dwell upon what would result from the realization of such a project; the wildest dreams, would not, comparatively, equal the astounding comminglings of nations and peoples that would be brought about; a great social revolution would be effected; the inhabitants of the old world, from London to Peking, would be all mingled together, and eventually, perhaps, converted to one religion.

One of the first additions to the civilization of the East (already in progress in India) would be, besides the construction of the rail, the presence of troops and Europeans at the stations; for through many parts of Asia the lines would, perhaps, require the protection of soldiers, the only objection to which would be the expense; but it is a question, worthy of reflection, whether it would not be, that the greater the outlay in which Great Britain was involved, the greater would be her prosperity. Her superabundant capital would bear to be reduced by taxation; it is a fallacy to suppose, that in England taxation affects the poor; it is only in communities where rich and poor are properly balanced, that taxation presses upon production. The more of her poor that Great Britain can continue to support artificially the better; by artificially, is meant, as soldiers, sailors, and police, or as artisans and workmen.

Although the social advantages which would result from the construction and final establishment of this means of intercommunication, would be great indeed; the political advantages and considerations are of no less importance, at least, as far as Australia is concerned; for, by the aid of Railways and Electric Telegraphs, Great Britain and her Colonies and dependencies, may be cemented into one nation. No longer would arise the necessity for separate legislatures—no longer would there be the striving to reconcile the anomaly of Responsible Government with Imperial control. But Australia, divided into small provinces, could send her members to Parliament, and, by the aid of the Telegraph, the minutest circumstances and details, and expressions of public opinion, could be passed backwards and forwards. The reports of parliamentary doings in London could be published in Sydney in less time than it took, thirty years ago, for them to reach Liverpool or Bristol. The speed, however, with which intelligence could be conveyed between Sydney and London by the Telegraph, must remain, until tried, a matter of surmise merely, because there might be interruptions to one continuous shock, which it is impossible to foresee; but, without such hindrance, a second, or a fraction of a second, would suffice to convey signs between the Antipodes. The journey of a Member of Parliament from Sydney to London, would be less hazardous, and occupy less time, than a journey from Edinburgh in former times; indeed, by the aid of the rail, Sydney would be brought as near to London as Canada now is. At the rate of 50 miles an hour, the (13,000) thirteen thousand miles would take 10 days; but allowing for the bits of steaming, and the necessity, perhaps, of rest for the travellers—the journey might take some 20 days, more or less; a period sufficiently brief to warrant the belief that the Australian Colonies may become, according to the views of the late Sir Robert Peel, as much a part and parcel of the British Empire as if they were so many additional counties merely. For suppose that it were possible to add to the superficies of England;—suppose there were some great upheaving of land above the level of the ocean,—then, although the social fabric would have to be created, there would be no thought of giving to this new land a separate Legislature and Responsible Government.

The philanthropy and nationality of the whole of the British people may well be enlisted in such a cause as this, which would not only cement them in one grand political union, distribute manufactures and raw material, and the supplies of food, but would equalize and spread over the available waste lands of the Pacific, the too crowded population of the Old World, benefiting, to an almost unimaginable extent, those pent-up sections of the human family, who only require the means to enable them to escape from the most intense wretchedness.

However utopian these suggestions for telegraph and railway may appear to some readers, it will be found, on consideration, that, in comparison with bygone suggestions now realized, this is nothing more than a daring proposition, which, sooner or later, will become a fact;—just as a railway between London and Peking will become a fact, and a hundred other railway intercommunications not now dreamed of.

It has oftentimes, in the present day, been suggested, that the spread of the Anglo-Saxon race over the whole world is one of the means devised by the great Spirit of the Universe, to bring about that progressive amelioration to which mankind is evidently subjected, and without which man's endowment of reason would be useless. This scheme, therefore, for a highway of the greatest possible extent, which the position of the dry land of the earth will admit of, may be considered an important step towards the accomplishment of one of the supposed decrees of the Creator—"And the sixth angel poured out his vial on the great river Euphrates, and the water thereof was dried up, *that the way of the Kings of the East might be prepared.*" Unless these provinces become the United States of Australia, there are few in this Colony who may not live to see Queen Victoria a visitor to the Governor General of all the Australias; few who may not see the British Association holding its sittings in Sydney; whilst Jenny Linds, and other prodigies, would be as familiar to the Sydneyites as to the Londoners.

PART IV.

PRESENT STATE, 1854.

The laying down of the sub-marine Telegraph from Spezzia to the Island of Corsica—an event of wide world importance—has just been most satisfactorily accomplished.—*Letter from Cape Corso, July 25th.*

We are glad to observe that the Electric Telegraph betwixt Bombay and Calcutta is at present in good working order.—*Bengal Hurkaru, August 20th.*

The Electric Telegraph between Agra and Calcutta, 800 miles in length, is completed.

Almost before we have learned to regard the idea of a magnetic intercourse betwixt England and India, as anything better than chimerical, there seems something like a probability of its being actually realized.—*Agra Messenger, August 26th.*

It is impossible to read the above quotations without coming to the conclusion that the time is not far distant, when, by the aid of the Electric Telegraph, a few days may serve for communication between Sydney and the great cities of Europe. When, some two years ago, the views on this subject were laid before the public, and it was shewn that the establishment of a Telegraphic intercourse between Sydney and London was not only feasible but probable, that it might be looked upon as a thing to be, there was little prospect that such rapid advances would have been made in so short a time towards its accomplishment. Now, however, that the line between France and Africa has been partly laid down, its extension to Alexandria cannot be doubted, and then, as the line between Bombay and Calcutta is already in action, it is unlikely that any obstacles whatever will be permitted to interfere with the ultimate completion of the connection between Bombay and Alexandria. Already three eligible lines have been proposed by a Mr. Adley for connecting Bombay and Alexandria, and the expense of each calculated, so that the Telegraphic intercourse between London and Calcutta is a matter which all the English newspapers look upon as almost accomplished. Can it be doubted, then, that Singapore, which is becoming one of the most important cities of the world, will be left out of the magic line, when the means which it would afford of rapid communication with China and the Pacific Islands is considered, and, as a matter of still greater importance, the means of communication with the great and growing Australian Colonies? Whenever the Telegraph reaches Singapore, its extension to Sydney must follow. The chain of islands from Sumatra to Timor offer sufficient facilities; the sub-marine arrangements required to connect the different islands present very short distances—the greatest will be between Timor and Port Essington; indeed this will be the longest sub-marine bit in the whole line. From Port Essington through the western interior of Australia, the wires could be buried, and so require but little attention.

It is a mistake to suppose that the Electric Telegraph is suited to short distances only,—quite a mistake; the importance and utility of the Electric Telegraph must evidently increase with the distance, and ere long the transmission of letters by post between the antipodes must cease; no one will care to be writing a letter which it will require five or six months to get an answer to, when it could be obtained in a few days or hours; the transmission of cart-loads of newspapers backwards and forwards would cease, and the contents of the *Times* would be made known in Sydney in two or three days, instead of two or three months; so that eventually, perhaps, the Australian Post Office departments may be entirely set aside to make way for Electric Telegraph departments.

That the merchants of Sydney, Singapore, and London, should be any longer content with the present bungling, round-about mode of communication, is really astounding,—if there were any insurmountable obstacle to telegraphic communication, then the present system might be tolerated; but as the establishment of a line of Electric Telegraphs is merely a matter of expense, and the existing expense of Mail Steamers is enormous,—far greater, perhaps, than the Telegraph would be,—so there appears to be no great obstacle but the want of energy to the carrying out of this glorious project, which is again brought under notice, because it is always desirable to keep in view all great prospective benefits, so that we may avail ourselves of every turn and advantage towards the accomplishment of that, which, although inevitable, may be more or less advanced in proportion to the enthusiasm with which it may be received, and the agitation which is brought to bear upon it.

APPENDIX B.

CONSTRUCTION (COST OF).

	£
Survey from Sydney to Port Essington, 1,800 miles, at £5 per mile ...	10,000
Telegraph Wires, 1,800 miles, at £50 per mile	90,000
Stations at every 30 miles, 60 at £500 each	30,000
Total	£130,000

ANNUAL COST.

	£
Interest on original outlay of £130,000, at 5 per cent.	6,500
Conductors at each Station, 60, at £500 per annum	12,000
Men (at each Station 5), 300, at £50 each per annum	15,000
Rations for 6 men at each Station, 360, at £40 each	14,400
Horses (2 at each Station) 120, at £50 each	6,000
Contingencies	1,100
Total	£55,000