

ELECTRO-MAGNETIC TELEGRAPH, BY PROFESSOR MORSE.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

TRANSMITTING

A letter from Professor Morse, on the subject of his electro-magnetic telegraph.

JANUARY 4, 1839.

Submitted to the House by the chairman of the Committee on Commerce, and ordered to be printed.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,

December 28, 1838.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit, herewith, a copy of a communication just received from Professor Samuel F. B. Morse, now in Paris, (France,) upon the subject of his "electro-magnetic telegraph," and beg leave to invite the respectful attention of the Committee on Commerce of the House of Representatives to the same.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

LEVI WOODBURY,

Secretary of the Treasury.

HON. SAMUEL CUSHMAN,

*Chairman of Committee on Commerce,
House of Representatives.*

PARIS, (FRANCE,) October 27, 1838.

SIR: I have the honor to inform you that since my communication to you, bearing date September 27, 1837, printed in the documents of the House of Representatives, No. 753, 25th Congress, 2d session, I have so far tested and perfected my electro-magnetic telegraph as to place its capacity, to the full extent therein contemplated, beyond any doubt; and I therefore deem it proper to apprise you of the fact, as it may, in the estimation of your Department and of Congress, render unnecessary the appropriation for purposes of mere experiment proposed by the

Committee on Commerce of the House of Representatives, in House bill No. 713, to which committee your communication of my letter was made by the House. If Congress should still desire the experiment, however, I have no objection whatever in fulfilling its wishes, as contemplated by the said bill, and will cheerfully execute or cause to be executed satisfactorily any service that may be devolved on me in the premises by your own or any other Department of the Government. I would, however, most respectfully add, that it is highly important to me to know the wishes and the judgment of the Government on the subject of adopting this kind of telegraph at the earliest period practicable, as my delay to render it available, by committing its use to the control of associations of private individuals, is wholly dependent upon the refusal of it, which I have had the honor to submit to the Government, through yourself and the Committee on Commerce. For all additional details which may be desired on the subject, I would refer to my associate, Professor Gale, of the New York City University, who is fully empowered to act in my behalf, in all respects, during my absence.

In case the Government should prefer to construct a line of the electro-magnetic telegraph between any two or more given points, as between New York city and Washington city, or in any one or more directions on other routes, in order to an absolute adoption, for itself, of the exclusive right to the use of the invention throughout the Union, I am enabled to state (from data which the past season in the United States, in England, and in this country, (France,) has furnished me, relative to the prices of copper wire, &c., and the expenses of the different modes that have been suggested for encasing the telegraphic wires in the earth) that the aggregate expense of constructing the *telegraph entire*, ready for use, including the laying down in the earth two and a half or three feet in depth, will not exceed \$520 per mile; and this includes two complete sets of wire, independent of each other, like a double railway, so that intelligence can be transmitted either way, at any moment.

This estimate is, of course, exclusive of any extra protection that might be incident to its location across running streams. The expense of inserting other and independent sets of wires in the same tubes or encasements with the former, so as to connect any intermediate points with either of the foregoing extremities, or with each other, will but very little exceed the naked cost of the wires. Any desired number of additional wires may thus be included. I can undertake to construct, by contract, any given length of telegraphic line at that rate, leaving the compensation for the use of the invention itself to the future decision of Congress, if such a course shall be preferred, or as an alternative that may better suit the views of Congress. I will construct for the Government any such line (not less than 100 miles) upon the most economical terms in my power, under any system of accountability which may be instituted, leaving, as before suggested, my own personal compensation (beyond current expenses) to the after decision of the Government. However, in either of the latter cases, I trust the Government will not desire me to preclude the invention from use in other parts of the Union, not selected by the Government for its own telegraphic line.

The Government will also, in either case, obtain, at its own expense, the right of way requisite to lay and protect the telegraph, whithersoever

it may lead. But as the highways are usually the most eligible in every respect for laying down the wires, no expense of any moment can arise from this source.

It gives me pleasure to inform you that the subject of electric telegraphs is engaging the attention not merely of the most eminent scientific men in Europe, but also of several of the Governments, and particularly of the French Government, with a view of adopting some one of the inventions which England, and Germany, and France, and the United States, have severally brought forth. This Government lately directed the administrator-in-chief of the telegraphs of France to examine these several inventions, and to report upon them to the Minister of the Interior. This report has been made; and I was much gratified to learn, both from the administrator of the telegraphs, and from the secretary of the minister, that after a careful and minute investigation of all the electric telegraphs proposed, the *American Telegraph* is recommended as the simplest and best. I am at this moment awaiting the orders of the Minister of the Interior.

Renewing my reference to Professor Gale, for all additional information on the subject that may be desired, I have the honor to be, &c.

SAMUEL F. B. MORSE.

To the Hon. the SECRETARY of the Treasury
of the United States.

it may lead. But as the highways are usually the most eligible in every respect for laying down the wires, no expense or any moment can arise from this matter which is not covered by the cost of the electric lines.

It gives me pleasure to inform you that the subject of electric telegraphs is among the questions of the most urgent nature, and that the means for their establishment are of the most important, and that the study of the French Government, with a view of adopting some one of the inventions which have been brought forth. This Government lately directed the States have several telegraphs. This Government lately directed the administration of the telegraphs of France to examine these several inventions, and to report upon them to the Minister of the Interior. This report has been made, and was much gratified to learn, both from the administration of the telegraphs, and from the secretary of the interior, that after a careful and minute investigation, all the electric telegraphs proposed, the American Telegraph is recommended as the simplest and best. I am at this moment awaiting the orders of the Minister of the Interior, for the construction of the telegraphs.

Renewing my references to Professor Gale, for all additional information on the subject that may be desired, I have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient servant, SAMUEL J. B. MORSE.

To the Hon. the Secretary of the Treasury, I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst., and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration. I have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient servant, SAMUEL J. B. MORSE.

Again I am, Sir, your obedient servant, SAMUEL J. B. MORSE.