

either route. The payments are probably not at all heavier than would be the cost of contributions to the cost of the Suez service alone, which would devolve upon the western Colonies if the expense of this service were not shared by New South Wales and New Zealand. The above allocation is proposed as adapted to the existing circumstances of the Colonies, and should be revised at stated intervals.

The bringing into operation of the scheme now proposed need not be deferred until new contracts are obtained for the Suez service; the plan can be given effect to as soon as the assent of the Imperial Government is obtained, and in the meantime the Colonial moiety should be contributed in the proportions above stated.

It is desirable that the attention of the British Post Office should be called to the fact that if the mails proceeding from Great Britain to the Eastward are in future to be despatched at weekly intervals, the mails to the West Indies, of which the Panama line is a branch, should also be despatched at intervals of four weeks instead of a calendar month, in order that the two services may harmonise.

JOHN HALL,
CROSBIE WARD.

QUEENSLAND.

Melbourne, March, 1867.

WE, the representatives of the Government of Queensland at this Conference, and in terms of a suggestion on the part of the Conference, that each Colony should put forward its own proposal, beg to offer, for the consideration of the Conference, the two following propositions:—

There are three routes now before the Conference, viz.: that from and to Galle and Melbourne; that from and to Sydney and New Zealand *via* Panama; and that from Galle by way of Singapore and Torres Straits.

The first of our proposals is as follows:—

That the Conference should recommend to all the Colonies represented by it, to subsidize the whole of these routes, the contribution by each Colony to be in proportion to its population.

In submitting this proposition to the Conference, we do not do so because we think that for postal purposes these three routes are essential. We regard these lines as not wholly in existence for postal purposes, and we think them calculated to bring the various Colonies into direct and immediate communication with every portion of the world. We submit this proposal in the hope that by a subsidy to the three routes an amicable and united recognition may be made of the claims and interests of all the Colonies.

In the event of the above suggestion being acceded to, there will be no necessity for considering our second one; but should the Conference not concur in approval of the three routes, then our second proposition is as follows:—

The Colony of Queensland, while hitherto paying her full share, at least, for the conveyance of the mails by King George's Sound and Melbourne, has practically derived little or no benefit from that line, for it very seldom happens that the incoming mail arrives in Queensland in time to have letters answered by the outgoing mail of the same month; and in no case does it ever arrive in time for answers beyond a circuit of a few miles around Brisbane.

We propose, therefore, that the Conference should recommend the establishment of a fortnightly mail from Galle; one mail to be carried as at present by Adelaide and Melbourne, the other to be conveyed by way of Singapore and Torres Straits, the contract amount to be borne by the several Colonies as follows—one-half on the basis of population, the other half in proportion to the estimated number of letters forwarded and received by each respective Colony.

This proposal commends itself for various reasons:—

- (1.) The Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamers already carry the English mails to Singapore, where there are docks in which these steamers are regularly examined, and the probability therefore is, that that Company would offer to convey the mails from Singapore to Australia, by way of Torres Straits, at a less sum than any other Company.
- (2.) By the employment of good steamers, bound to a certain average speed, and on the completion of the improvements now going on in Torres Straits, the mail by that route ought to be delivered in Melbourne within a very limited period beyond that at which the present mail arrives, while the public intelligence, as announced by the electric wire, and much private and business information by the same way, would in connection with the mail steamer, reach the whole of the Colonies much earlier than by any other route.
- (3.) The line by Torres Straits and Singapore is a smooth water passage, with natural advantages unknown to any other route, and must, when well opened, be the one preferred by all passengers proceeding to England.
- (4.) Regarding the Torres Strait route as something more than a postal one to Europe, it opens up to these Colonies a new and safe means of access to India, China, Japan, and California, in place of the stormy passage by the Leeuin.

Having submitted the two foregoing propositions to the Conference, we would now add that, in the event of the rejection of both, or in the event of any modification in which we cannot concur, we reserve to ourselves the right of considering any other proposal that may be submitted, and of assenting or dissenting therefrom, either in whole or in part.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

First Proposition.

THE Colonies to move the Imperial Government to undertake the payment of a moiety of the lines *via* Panama, making an estimate of the contribution at present paid by the free conveyance of the Australian mails by the West Indian Mail Service.