

The Conference.

FRIDAY, 2ND FEBRUARY, 1877.

The Conference having met at half-past 10 o'clock, the minutes of the proceedings on the 31st ultimo were read and confirmed.

The Conference resumed consideration of the motion of the Hon. Ebenezer Ward,—“That the Conference will proceed to the consideration of the mail services between the colonies and Great Britain, with the view of securing, if possible, united action in future arrangements.”

After considerable discussion, the Hon. Ebenezer Ward, with the consent of the Conference, withdrew his motion.

The Hon. Sir Henry Ayers, with the leave of the Conference, proposed the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted:—

“That the Government of Queensland and South Australia be requested to circulate among the respective Governments the draft Bills referred to in the resolutions of the Intercolonial Conference held in Sydney, passed on the 10th February, 1873, for removing the defects in the law relating to the extradition of criminals and the absconding of debtors, with a view to the same being submitted to the respective Legislatures as early as practicable.”

The following are the resolutions referred to:—

“That the present state of the law in regard to the extradition of criminals escaping from one colony into another is defective. That the Government of Queensland be requested to prepare a Bill on the subject, which the representatives of the several colonies undertake—provided it is approved by their respective Law Officers—to endeavour to pass into law.”

“That the present state of the law in regard to remedies to be had against absconding debtors is defective.”

“That the Government of South Australia be requested to prepare a Bill to remedy the defects, and, subject to the approval of their respective Law Officers, the members of this Conference will endeavour to procure the passing of a similar Bill in their respective Legislatures.”

The Hon. R. Ramsay, with the consent of the Conference, moved the following resolution, which was unanimously agreed to:—

“That in the opinion of the Conference it is desirable that a uniform telegraphic code should be adopted by the several Australasian Colonies.”

The report of the proceedings of the Conference having been carefully considered and amended in certain particulars, was finally adopted.

On the motion of the Hon. Charles Stuart Mein, the following resolutions were unanimously passed by the Conference:—

“1. That the thanks of the Conference be given to the Hon. John Robertson for the valuable services rendered by him as Chairman of the Conference.”

“2. That the Chairman be requested to convey the thanks of the Conference to Alexander C. Budge, Esq., for the efficient services rendered by him as Secretary to the Conference.”

The Conference then adjourned *sine die*.

JOHN ROBERTSON, Chairman.

DOCUMENTS.

[The following were amongst the documents laid before the Conference.]

PROPOSALS for a DUPLICATE TELEGRAPH CABLE to connect the Australasian Colonies with the rest of the World.

The Colonial Secretary's letter on this subject was addressed to Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania, New Zealand, and South Australia. The following are the four routes indicated in it:—

1. Sydney to New Zealand, thence by the Sandwich Islands to San Francisco.
2. From Normanton by cable, the line ultimately taking the same course as 3 and 4.
3. From Port Darwin by cable, by the side of present cable, passing by land through Sumatra and *via* Malacca, instead of by cable to Singapore.
4. From Port Darwin by cable, touching at Copang.

The French Consul's letter concerning the co-operation of New Caledonia was communicated to the same colonies.

There is a letter from Mr. Audley Coote, dated 5th June, in which he suggests three routes as preferable, for certain reasons, to those above mentioned—two of them by way of North-West Cape (Western Australia) and Singapore; the third by Perth and Ceylon.

This project of taking the line by way of Western Australia is also set forth in a letter from Mr. J. Hogan to the Postmaster General. It also finds favour with Sir Julius Vogel and with the Governments of Western Australia and South Australia.

From all the colonies replies have been received to Mr. Robertson's letter.

The Chief Secretary of Victoria says that the matter shall receive the earnest attention of his Government.

South Australia could not entertain 1 or 2, as too costly. It would be most advantageous to adopt 3 or 4, the selection being left to the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company; but if line be taken through Java, the Company must have an independent land wire. But two other routes are suggested as worthy of consideration—(a) from North-West Cape, or Roeburne, by Java to Singapore; (b) from the west coast direct to Galle. A duplicate cable from Port Darwin would, however, be the readiest and cheapest. In any circumstances they ought not to be required to contribute to the cable subsidy. The overland telegraph line ought to be regarded as an intercolonial undertaking, and the cost should be borne by the colonies using it. The Eastern Extension Telegraph Company ought to be required to keep a steamer always near Port Darwin, and a continued interruption for a given time should entail deductions from the subsidy.