

The Conference. pany our telegraphic system is at your service free of charge. We shall be happy to telegraph you every information you may desire, being anxious to meet wishes and give every facility for carrying out object of Conference. With respect to route for duplicate cable, we find that from North-West Cape to Galle full of danger, repairs in deep water almost impossible on account of prevailing trade-winds.

The President, Telegraphic Conference, Sydney.

JOHN PENDER.

Memorandum for HUGH GEORGE, Esq., General Manager, the *Argus*.

As a Conference of representatives from the several colonies is about to assemble in Sydney for the discussion of telegraph cable matters, I accept this as a favourable opportunity of bringing under your notice the various complaints which have from time to time arisen, and continue to arise, in connection with the cable messages received by the *Argus* on behalf of the Associated Press. These complaints are principally delays in transmission, the absence of official information as to interruptions on the lines, and the mutilation of messages; and with these I propose to deal singly.

The *Argus* is the only newspaper receiving Press telegrams of public news through the cable, and, as representing the Associated Press, all such messages addressed to the the *Argus* are distributed over the whole Press in Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania, and New Zealand.

*Delays in Transmission.*

From some cause, at present not sufficiently traceable, the *Argus* messages from Singapore and London have not latterly been transmitted over the lines with that despatch formerly employed, and the consequence is that the messages bearing early dates at either or both of these points of departure seldom reach their destination until a very late hour of the night, which, apart from being highly inconvenient, causes the loss of valuable news to a large section of the country Press in all the colonies. Not unfrequently we obtain advice of a batch of cable messages "coming," and often have to wait an hour or even two before they actually arrive. In such case the delay must rest with the Telegraph Department of South Australia.

*Notice of Interruptions.*

We have very frequently had to complain of the absence of all information in regard to interruptions, whether on the cable or land line; and it has very often happened that until the repairs are effected no official information has been given that any interruption has taken place. A number of country stations are nightly kept on hand, in anticipation of cable news, and cannot be released from duty until some notification is received from Adelaide, and therefore early intimation of interruptions on the lines would save much loss of time, trouble, and expense. To the reading public, too, who follow the progress of events in Europe from day to day, some explanation should be afforded for the non-appearance of cable intelligence. If the general rule was followed to give priority to Press messages after those of the Government, much inconvenience, I think, would be obviated, and much loss of time saved, as at present, hours are frequently wasted to no purpose. Mr. Todd, in a letter under date 10th January, 1875, and addressed to you, says, "This office (South Australia) shall be advised if there is no message for your newspaper, which advice will be at once repeated to the Melbourne office." This, I regret to say, has not been acted upon.

*The Mutilation of Messages.*

The messages addressed to the *Argus* are seldom, if ever, correctly interpreted, and the wording is so terribly mutilated in the course of transmission as to render their deciphering an operation of the utmost difficulty. Thus, it often happens that we find different interpretations of the same messages given in all the colonies, owing, in a great measure, to so much being left to mere guess work. This mutilation is said to have its origin in Java, where the messages pass through the hands of Dutch operators, and this statement is to a great extent confirmed from the fact that nearly all the "repeats of corrections" come from Batavia. The majority of our messages containing general news are sent from Singapore, and it can scarcely be credited that the telegrams could be received in Java from Singapore, through only a short line of cable, in such a state as we invariably receive them. Although there is some slight difference between the alphabets adopted on the cable and land lines, the errors that would be thereby caused are so simple and few that they could, as a rule, be easily detected. If each newspaper had to find its own interpretation of the originals the results would be simply absurd. The effect of these mutilations is obvious, and as an illustration I append a few specimens of some of the messages received only during the last month, and the sample affords a very fair specimen of the bulk:—

"Singapore (no date).

"Depetris declared Italy cannot abandon Treaty Paris. All essays approval, all refrentum. Gratinffs proposal despoleres approving their decisions. Kabinck defered resolution occupation Bulgaria pending reference Queen. Propose 6,000 Belgians occupaty. Disraelig Fortress Belgrade fired Australian monitor."

"Singapore, 15th Dec.

"French Ministry remodelled. Simon, Premier. Interior, Martha, Justice. Others remain. This serimous conflict M'Mahon left indeed."

"Singapore, 6th December.

"Kistmaryk Reichstach Russia seekn not great conquests, asks Ris only cooperan conference amelooran Christian's triple alliance subsists, Germany's friendship, England equally traditional, believed difference England and Russia be arranged, Germany's task medcate Powers lokalize war, if efforts fudle, cannot conjecture future."