

The Conference. I have seen plans of it, but I think it is impracticable ; it is too long a section to work with any degree of accuracy ; it is about 3,000 miles.

68. *Mr. Anderson.*] That is not longer than some of the American cables?—The longest section of American cable is under 2,400 miles, from Brest in France to St. Pierre in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

69. *Mr. Ramsay.*] Are you aware of any action that has been initiated for the establishment of a line of telegraph between the Mauritius and Aden?—I am not. I know it was spoken of some time ago.

70. Is there any immediate probability of its construction?—I think not.

71. *Mr. Fraser.*] I have heard that in the Cape Colony a motion has been set on foot to obtain direct communication between the Cape and St. Helena and Ascension Islands?—It was discussed about three years ago, but I have heard nothing of it since. They were anxious for it at that time, and applied to the Home Government to assist them, but that was refused, and the matter fell through.

72. And a further extension from the Cape to the Mauritius was included in the proposal?—Yes.

73. In such a case a line from West Australia to the Mauritius would secure complete communication to Europe *viâ* the Cape, apart from the line to these islands?—Yes, if that line were constructed.

74. Are you of opinion that it would be practicable to carry out that line?—It would be most difficult.

75. It is not longer than from America to England?—Yes, it is ; 1,800 miles is the greatest length of cable from America to British shores—from Valentia to Trinity Bay, Newfoundland.

76. And you are distinctly of opinion that a continuous line of 3,000 miles would be impracticable with present appliances?—Not impracticable, but difficult.

77. *Mr. Burns.*] You would not rely upon the working of a line of that length? No ; it would be more difficult to work and more expensive ; it would be much better to be interrupted at some point.

78. *Mr. McLean.*] Have you any knowledge of the working of the present line, from Singapore to Banjoewangie?—Yes.

79. Which is the worst portion of that line?—The Dutch line from Batavia to Banjoewangie.

80. That would be entirely avoided by laying a cable from Singapore to Banjoewangie?—Yes.

81. Do you apprehend any difficulty in laying down a line from those points?—No.

82. What appliances have you at present for repairing the cable in case of a break between these points?—A vessel fully equipped for cable work is always laying at Singapore when not required elsewhere.

83. Would not the same appliances be more effective for repairs on a double line than on a single line?—No, they would be equally available.

84. Would not the shorter distances from point to point render them more effective for repairing?—No, because the vessel steams to a certain point marked on the chart where the repair is effected.

85. *Mr. Mein.*] Would your Company have any difficulty in establishing a line between Sourabaya and Copang and Torres Straits?—I presume not ; the only difficulty would be that it would be liable to interruption.

86. That difficulty would apply to both sections?—Yes.

87. Would there be any difficulty first in constructing and then in maintaining in working order a line between those points?—No, I do not see any difficulty.

88. And the appliances you possess for repairs would be as effective and convenient for that line as for any other?—Yes, except that there might be more work for one vessel.

89. *Mr. Ramsay.*] What better provision have you now for keeping the present line in working order than you had when the last breakage occurred?—None ; we have just the same provision—two vessels.

90. How long was the cable out of use at that time?—From April 24th to August 7th, which was a most unfortunate period, as at that time there were three sections of the Company's cables down.

91. I wish to know whether you are in a better position now for keeping the line in good working order than you were then?—No ; we are exactly in the same position that we were in a year ago when the last break occurred.

92. Then the same thing might occur again at any time, and communication be interrupted for three or four months?—Yes ; it is possible, certainly.

93. *Mr. Griffith.*] Do you know how far apart from each other are the Atlantic cables belonging to the same Company?—No, I do not.

94. What would be the cost of keeping an extra vessel at Port Darwin, besides the one at Singapore?—The "Edinburgh" when in port costs us about £500 a month for crew and port charges, with the cost of additional hands when she goes to sea ; and then there is a percentage on the value of the policy of insurance.

95. What is your own opinion—that it would be cheaper to keep a second vessel at Port Darwin, or to subsidize another line?—That would depend upon whether the vessel was frequently required at sea. The expenses in port would be £6,000 a year, but it would be more when she went out to sea.

96. What would be the additional cost of each trip?—That would depend entirely upon the length of the trip.

97. What would be the cost of a cable from Banjoewangie to Port Darwin?—I am not empowered to make any estimate beyond the figures given in our Chairman's circular.

98. The cost of the ship stationed at Singapore, you say, is £500 a month? Yes, about that when lying in port ; I cannot give you a very close estimate.

Mr. SAMUEL KNEVETT, Agent for Eastern Extension Telegraph Company, called in and examined :—

99. *Mr. Fraser.*] I wish to know, Mr. Knevett, if you can give me any information with reference to a proposition submitted I believe by your Company. Mr. Barlee, who was Colonial Secretary in Western Australia, writing to Governor Robinson, says :—"With the Chairman of the Eastern