

The Conference.

122. Do you know anything of the seas along that route?—We know that starting from the North-West Cape we get into deep water, away from the warm waters in the northern seas, and away from some of the currents; and although it does not appear on this chart, the route we propose would go from the North-West Cape through Lombock Strait and on to Singapore, and not from Batavia to Singapore. The authorities in England would prefer to go this way.

123. Will you point out where this current is?—There are two currents [*indicating positions on map*].

124. Your Companies have no cables in the Eastern seas at present, have they?—Only in the Persian Gulf.

125. How far does your communication extend from Singapore?—It extends to Rangoon, in connection with the Government of India lines.

126. Have you taken any steps to extend that communication?—Yes, I hold a contract to construct a double-wired line from Tevoi to Singapore.

127. Is that line in course of construction?—The surveys are now being made.

128. Under whose control will it be?—Messrs. Siemens Brothers.

129. Then you have no repairing ships in those seas at present?—We have not; our repairing ship, the "Faraday," is in the Atlantic.

130. In the event of a contract being taken for the line you now propose, would you make it a part of the contract that a repairing ship should be kept in this sea?—Yes.

131. For the terms specified?—Yes.

132. *Mr. Fraser.*] In your fourth proposition you say "By cable to be supplied, &c." I assume that that means a complete cable entirely separate from the existing communication between Singapore and Batavia?—Yes.

133. And you would go from the North-West Cape either through Lombock Strait to Singapore?—We have considered that to be the best route; but we should have no objection to go to the right of this line and touch at Batavia.

134. That would be the most direct route?—Yes.

135. Would there be any difference in the cost between the line through Lombock Strait and the other line, or would you require an equal subsidy in each case?—An equal subsidy.

136. But I understand you to say that the route through Lombock Strait, touching at Sourabaya, was the best?—That is the opinion held by the authorities in London.

137. What is the line from Western Australia *via* Ceylon?—It was suggested that the line should go from the North-West Cape to Ceylon *via* Anjer. There might be some danger to the cable at the Cocos Islands. I have been informed that you can look down from some shelving rocks into an unfathomable ocean. These rocks are not more than 300 yards from the cocoa-nut trees. It was proposed that the line should go from the North-West Cape to Anjer or Batavia, or thence to Ceylon.

138. *Mr. Fraser.*] False Point, in India, was another alternative line that would touch at Singapore?—Yes.

139. That would complete a continuous cable from Australia to India?—Yes.

140. That is to say, Australia would have a continuous and independent communication with India, which could not be interfered with by any other country?—Yes, we could make 1,000-mile connections all the way from Australia.

141. *Mr. Griffith.*] What is the distance from Copang to Cape York?—About 1,000 miles. In each of those places there is a complete duplicate system from the time a message is received at any office in Australia until it is received in England.

142. Have you English operators in each country?—Yes, right through.

143. Will you state shortly your route, starting from Rangoon?—From Rangoon to Calcutta, then to Kurrachee, thence to Teheran to Tiflis; but between Kurrachee and Bushire there is a cable laid down to duplicate the land line of the Indo-European Company. From Tiflis by the frontiers of Germany to Berlin, and thence to London.

144. Are your principals, the Indo-Australian Telegraph Company, represented there?—Yes, we have entered into an agreement with the Indo-European Company to allow us a rebate of 40 per cent. upon all messages from Australia.

145. That is a permanent working arrangement?—Yes.

146. *Mr. Mein.*] Are these several proposals which you make in connection with the subsidy dependent upon the present rate of charges, or are you prepared to allow the colonies to fix their own rate of charges?—We would allow the colonies to fix their own rate of charges.

147. You would prefer to leave the rate of charges to competition between the different colonies?—I would.

148. Fixing a maximum charge, I suppose?—Yes, we should be obliged to do that.

149. What maximum charge would you be prepared to fix?—Six shillings a word for ten words including address, which is the present rate.

150. On the terms you offer?—On the terms we offer.

151. *The Chairman.*] Your Company has stated what they will lay down a line for from Normanton to Singapore. What will they do it for from Port Darwin—would it be more or less?—Less.

152. How much less?—We should require a subsidy of £45,000 for a cable from Port Darwin to Singapore.

153. And how much from Normanton or Cape York?—£50,000.

154. That would make a difference of £5,000?—Yes.

155. *Mr. Mein.*] The line from Cape York would be shorter, would not that make a difference?—There would be the difference in the cost of the cable; we should be prepared to allow that in the subsidy.

156. Then I understand you that the line from Cape York would be £48,500?—No, £49,000. Of course the subsidies have not been calculated on the cost of that cable.

157. *Sir H. Ayers.*] Are you a professional electrician?—I am not.