

158. How have you obtained your knowledge of the bottom of the seas you have been describing? The Conference.
I have travelled over a great part of them, and I have obtained the latest information respecting them from Captain Nares, of H.M.S. "Challenger," who took lately the only soundings ever taken in those seas, showing the depth along this dotted line [*indicating line on map*]. We know almost as much of the soundings round and south of Timor as we do of the soundings fifty miles from the Australian coast.

159. Will you state whether this information has been obtained by you, or is derived from your own knowledge?—It is not only derived from my own knowledge, but has been collected by me from Captain Nares, the best authority I could obtain from the Admiralty in England, from the latest data, and from the charts giving the actual soundings.

160. But you have not taken soundings on board cable ships yourself?—No, I have not actually taken soundings.

161. But you say you know the coral reef along this line?—Yes.

162. And you state that there are no coral reefs about Timor?—Yes, I know it from the charts made by the Admiralty officer sent down purposely to survey this very spot; from the information that gentleman has given me, and from the soundings actually taken and placed on the charts—

163. You are getting away from my question. You seemed to think there was a coral reef here [*indicating locality on map*], on this line from Port Darwin to Banjoewangie; was that from your own knowledge of the bottom?—The soundings are given on the chart, and show the nature of the bottom. The present cable has been removed from that very coral bank to the sea, which I have told you is now clear of coral reefs.

164. *Mr. Anderson.*] The present cable is clear of the coral bank? Yes, I am given to understand that it was on the edge of the coral bank that it was broken, and that it is now quite clear of it.

165. *Mr. McLean.*] Your principals are connected with the cable across the Atlantic from Australia to America?—Yes, by the direct United States cable and through America by the Western Union Telegraph system.

166. Have they received any instructions to negotiate for a line by Honolulu?—Yes.

167. What is your opinion of it?—There is nothing against it except the expense.

168. But supposing all those islands should agree to a subsidy, there would be no objection on the score of expense?—None whatever, only the line is considerably longer than many persons in Australia think it is. The actual distance is somewhere about 7,500 miles, and that would require a length of cable over 8,000 miles: the sections would be cut in lengths of 1,000 miles between San Francisco and Honolulu and Fiji.

169. They would not be longer than other existing lines?—No, there is nothing against it except commercially; we should get nothing from Honolulu or Fiji.

170. Have these questions been discussed by your Company?—Yes. I have at the present moment the particulars of a subsidy for laying down that cable.

171. *Mr. Griffith.*] And what subsidy do you think would be necessary to open that route?—Well, it would be at least double the present subsidy.

172. *Mr. Stuart.*] Are you thinking of starting from Australia?—Yes.

173. Why should you start from Australia?—Well, the French Government have £8,000 ready as a subsidy for a line from Australia to New Caledonia; and although the outlay would not be very great, we should require a subsidy of £25,000 for that cable alone.

174. *Mr. McLean.*] Well, you should get a subsidy from Honolulu and the other islands, and I do not see why they should not give it for this line?—The Government of Honolulu told me that they would give no subsidy, and the Postmaster-General told me the same.

175. But Sir Julius Vogel, who has obtained further information, states that they are very likely to give it?—Then there would be no difficulty in constructing the line; you see we should only have to look for through messages from America.

176. It would be to the advantage of your Company, because it would bring a great deal of traffic from New Zealand, as well as the Islands?—Yes; that is why we are endeavouring to make arrangements with the Honolulu Government to land the first section on that island.

177. *Mr. Griffith.*] What would be the longest section along that route?—From Fiji to Honolulu; we have tried all we could to make these cables in 1,000-mile sections, because the cost of laying a cable over 1,000 miles is considerably more than for 1,000 miles, and the cable is more expensive.

178. Have you any knowledge of the sea through which the cable would pass along that route?—No; the Secretary to the Postal authorities has promised to send me the information. From what we know of it, it is an exceedingly deep sea, and, as far as we could learn from the "Tuscaroora," it is a good bottom, and when they got within about thirty miles of the shores of Queensland they reported that their leads dropped into a hole from 3,000 to 4,000 fathoms deep.

179. And so far as you have ascertained, there is quite as good a bottom there as along the route by Java?—Yes, as far as we have had experience of the deep seas, we have generally found a soft bottom.

180. *Mr. McLean.*] Have you any authority to lay a cable along that route?—Oh yes, my authority is to obtain the best concessions I can, and to make a route between here and London whichever way you wish it to go.

181. When you were in treaty to make the line from the colonies to England in 1875, had you proper authority to carry out the agreement?—Yes.

182. Because I see there is a letter from Sir Julius Vogel, stating that the arrangement fell through because you were unable to carry out your agreement?—That letter never reached us, and there was another letter which was handed in by special messengers to Sir Julius Vogel, which has not appeared in the correspondence.

183. Have you that letter?—I have. [*Witness handed in a letter. Vide Appendix A.*]

184. And you have looked over this printed correspondence and see no trace of these letters?—No trace whatever.