

through the cable to and fro at Port Darwin, and not upon the basis of population. They also consider that the sinking fund should be vested in the hands of trustees appointed by the several colonies, and that the expenses of the renewal or repair of the duplicate cable should be paid out of such fund, the balance at the end of the twenty-two years to be distributed amongst the several contributing Governments according to their proportion of contribution; or it might, perhaps, be better to devote such balance towards forming the nucleus of a fund for procuring another cable. It also suggests itself to this Government that, in the event of the present cable being interrupted, either the Eastern Extension Australasia and China Telegraph Company should pay for the right of sending through the new cable, whilst the repairs were in progress, or that the subsidy on the duplicate cable should cease during such period of repairs.

4. This Government are of opinion, taking into consideration the importance that uninterrupted telegraphic communication must be to the mother country, that the Imperial authorities may be fairly asked to contribute a proportion of the subsidy and sinking fund.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

The Chairman of the Conference on Duplication of
Electric Cable, Melbourne.

G. S. WHITMORE.

The Conference thereupon deliberated on the proposals contained in the above letter.

Mr. BURNS then moved the following resolution, pursuant to notice, as amended by permission of the Conference:—

That, in the opinion of this Conference, provision should be made as early as practicable for ensuring greater certainty of telegraphic communication between Great Britain and the Australian Colonies and New Zealand.

Discussion ensued.

Motion put and carried unanimously.

Mr. MEIN then moved the following resolutions, pursuant to notice:—

(1.) That in the interest of all the Australasian Colonies it is essential that there should be a complete system of telegraphic communication between British India and the Continent of Australia, unconnected with the existing lines of the Eastern Extension Company, and under the control of an independent company or proprietary.

(2.) That the second system of communication should be connected with the capitals of the several Australian Colonies by means of land lines entirely independent of the lines connecting Port Darwin with Adelaide.

(3.) That on the completion of the second system of telegraphic communication with British India there should be paid to the Eastern Extension Company, throughout the period during which a subsidy shall be paid to the proprietors of such second system, a subsidy equal to per centum of the original capital cost of the construction of such company's present lines of cable between Singapore and Batavia, and Banjoewangie and Port Darwin, if they shall throughout such period maintain in effective working order a separate line of telegraphic communication between Port Darwin and British India.

(4.) That all subsidies which may be required for the construction or maintenance of ocean cables between British India and Australia should be paid and borne by the several Australian Colonies in such proportions as may be mutually determined.

Discussion ensued.—Motion put and negatived; all the colonies voting against the resolutions excepting Queensland.

The Conference then proceeded to consider the following resolutions, of which notice had been given by Sir James Wilson:—

(1.) That the cables connecting New South Wales with New Zealand, Tasmania with Victoria, and Port Darwin with Singapore, shall be considered as ocean lines, forming one common system of telegraphic communication between the Australasian Colonies and Europe.

(2.) That the cost of the subsidies now paid, or to be paid, towards those cables be borne by the colonies benefiting by the same rateably in proportion to their respective populations.

(3.) That South Australia be exempt from contribution to the line between Port Darwin and Singapore, in consideration of her large outlay in erecting and maintaining the trans-continental line of telegraph.

(4.) That, in the first instance, the populations of the several colonies, as officially estimated on the 31st December 1876, shall be the basis of the proportionate allotment of cost to each.

(5.) That such contributions shall be re-adjusted on the basis of the populations of the several colonies as shown by the next general census, and thereafter once in every five years.

(6.) That New Zealand be invited to concur in the foregoing resolutions.

(7.) That in case New Zealand declines to adopt the principle laid down in Resolution No. 1, the other Australasian Colonies represented at this Conference consent to recognize the New Zealand cable as an ocean line under the meaning of that resolution to the extent of the contribution now paid towards its maintenance by New South Wales, viz., £2,500.

(8.) That in consideration of the advantage afforded to the Australasian Colonies by the maintenance by Queensland of a duplicate land line of telegraph terminating at Normantown, the colonies represented at this Conference consent to recognize any cable that may be laid across the Gulf of Carpentaria, of say 360 miles in length, between Normantown and Roper's River, as an ocean line within the meaning of Resolution 1.

(9.) That in any arrangement entered into with the Eastern Telegraph Extension Company for subsidizing a duplicate cable provision should be made for the maintenance by such company during the subsistence of the contract of both the old and the new lines in full working order.

(10.) That the Governments of New South Wales and Victoria be empowered to enter into an agreement and contract with the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company for a second cable from Singapore direct to Banjoewangie, avoiding the Java land lines, and thence direct to Port Darwin, for an annual subsidy of not exceeding £32,400, for a period of years.