

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

FRIDAY, 10TH MAY 1878.

Members present:

The Hon. G. BERRY, M.L.A., in the Chair;	
The Hon. H. Cuthbert, M.L.C.,	The Hon. J. P. Boucant,
The Hon. J. F. Burns,	The Hon. C. S. Mein,
The Hon. Sir James M. Wilson,	C. Todd, Esq., C.M.G.

Colonel Glover examined.

1. *By the Chairman.*—We thought it desirable to ask you to come in at this early stage of the Conference, and we desire to know if you have any proposal that you are authorized to make that would be binding upon your directors; have they commissioned you to make a distinct and definite offer to these colonies?—When I first came out, I was sent out on the basis of your former Conference—to see if you could come to an agreement as to what you wanted done, and upon that we would have made an offer; but, since then, I find that, in December, the chairman had made an offer of a certain sum of money, which, on my referring home, was confirmed; therefore, the company is content to take that sum of money for the duplication, provided it goes to Darwin.

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2. That is from Singapore to Banjoewangie?—That is from Singapore to Banjoewangie, and Banjoewangie to Port Darwin, for which the company will take £32,400 per annum. The company did not know whether you wanted the duplication carried out in that way or some other, and therefore did not formulate any proposal till it knew the desire of the colonies.

3. Have you any written instructions?—I have a telegram, which has just come out.

4. The Conference would like to know what position you stand in?—I can show you a letter, authorizing me to come out on behalf of the company.

5. Let me put it in another way: You are, I suppose, only in a position to give information, and, on transmitting, the approval of the directors?—I am; I am in a position to make this offer, provided you adopt this line to Darwin; but if you come to an agreement that you do not think this line desirable—that you want any other line—then I should have to get instructions. Those I can have only by telegraph. I was simply instructed upon your first Conference, in which you expressed a desire for duplication. There were three different proposals in that; and so the company requested me to come and communicate with the colonies, and find out what they made up their minds to do, and upon that to make an offer; since then Mr. Todd has communicated to the different colonies the views of the company, and stated that the chairman had offered £32,400. Mr. Mein first spoke to me about it. I referred at once, and got an answer that the chairman was willing to accept that sum.

6. *By Mr. Mein.*—That is, you have authority to accept Mr. Morgan's proposal?—Yes; and to listen to any other proposals, and to refer and get an offer as soon as we know what is wanted.

7. *By the Chairman.*—I would like to ask whether, apart altogether from the colonies and from the question of duplication, are the directors satisfied?—This comes from the chairman.

8. But are they satisfied with the state of the cable and of the state of the intermittent service we have had hitherto?—I do not think we should have sought to duplicate the cable of our own accord.

9. It must have been a great loss to you?—I think not, nothing but what we can bear; we look upon it as part and parcel of telegraphy, we have come across rather a bad sea between Singapore and Batavia; but I think every time there is a break or interruption it is put down to this particular cable. There are many cables between this and England, and all the interruptions are not always due to the line between Singapore and Darwin.

10. *By Mr. Mein.*—But the interruptions are upon your own lines between India and Australia?—Not always of necessity; we had once a long interruption, you remember, between Penang and Madras. The interruption occurred in the monsoon; it happened unfortunately to occur the very day the monsoon burst. The ship went out, and was lying six months waiting for an opportunity to repair the cable; and had the whole British navy been there it could not have been repaired sooner than it was. In consequence of that we laid a second cable to Penang, out of the influence, as we hope, of the monsoon; but none of the lines are in such a state that we are likely to have another interruption of that sort. The lines are in shallow water; we can pick them up at any moment, and it is very much like the repair of a land line. We are perfectly confident that as soon as your line is broken we can repair it in a day or two of the ship getting there. On the other line we were not at all so, and on that account we put up the duplicate.

11. *By the Chairman.*—I asked you whether the company were themselves satisfied with the existing service or whether they thought a duplicate line was necessary, and I think your answer was in effect that they were tolerably well satisfied?—Yes.

12. And that in fact the large number of stoppages of which we complain do not occur upon the line here, but upon some of the other lines connecting us with Europe?—Yes.

13. Now I wish to ask you this question: All these stoppages or breakages that you are now referring to as not being in our waters would not of course be affected in any way by this duplication?—No.