

W. J. Cracknell,
Esq.,
continued,
10th May 1878.

322. *By Mr. Boucaut.*—At what date did you extend the line to Normantown?—[*The witness referred to papers.*] The extension was commenced some time in 1869, and it was completed on 3rd January, 1872.

323. And when to Cape York?—It is not at Cape York yet.

324. Have you gone up towards Cape York?—With the line?

325. Yes?—Yes; but not beyond Cooktown.

326. *By Mr. Mein.*—Looking at the return which was prepared in your office, can you inform the Conference what is the actual loss in working expenses alone that Queensland sustains through the line from Junction Creek to Normantown (300 miles), which you said was constructed for purely international purposes?—We are working that line at a loss of upwards of £3,000 a year.

327. You were asked when the line from Cooktown to Normantown was completed—will you when correcting your evidence put in the date when it was authorized?—I will. It was authorized in 1867.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned till to-morrow at half-past ten o'clock.

SATURDAY, 11TH MAY 1878.

Present :

The Hon. G. BERRY, in the Chair;

The Hon. H. Cuthbert,
The Hon. Sir J. M. Wilson,
The Hon. C. S. Mein,

The Hon. J. F. Burns,
The Hon. J. P. Boucaut,
C. Todd, Esq., C.M.G.

C. Todd, Esq., C.M.G., a member of the Conference, examined

C. Todd, Esq.,
11th May 1878.

328. *By Mr. Boucaut.*—You are the Superintendent of the telegraphs of South Australia?—I am.

329. And in that capacity have had a great deal of experience in telegraphy?—Yes.

330. And it was under your superintendence that the overland line from Adelaide to Port Darwin was carried out?—Yes.

331. And under your advice that the arrangement was made with the Eastern Telegraph Company and South Australia?—Yes; I pointed out that that was the shortest line to connect the southern colonies of Australia.

332. You have studied the subject closely in all its bearings, I believe?—I have; it has been a matter of study with me for the last nineteen or twenty years.

333. From a professional or political point of view?—Professional.

334. Then perhaps you will be kind enough, in answering my questions, to bear in mind the professional point of view. Will you give your opinion to the Conference as to which is the best route for the duplicature of the C cable?—Most certainly; I advocate that the duplicate cable should be laid in two sections from Singapore to Banjoewangie, so as to avoid the Dutch lines, with respect to which I do not wish to say anything against them, because I believe they are worked very well indeed, working as they do through the tropics, and being worked also by foreign operators; but great loss of time occurs occasionally, interruptions and also frequent mistakes through English messages being transmitted by foreign operators. I therefore recommend that the cable should be laid from Singapore to Banjoewangie. I also advocate that for another reason, and that is, I believe from enquiries that I have made, and from my own investigations, that the cable will find a better sea bottom than between Singapore and Batavia; and the second section should be from Banjoewangie to Port Darwin. I recommend this, because it will be the speediest means of communicating between the Australian colonies and Singapore. As a matter of fact, the land line between Adelaide and Port Darwin throughout the greater part of the year, at least nine months of the year, is under such favorable atmospheric circumstances that we can transmit messages with only one repetition between Adelaide and Port Darwin, a distance of nearly 2,000 miles. All we require, in fact, is one automatic translator at Alice Springs. As a matter of fact, therefore, there being no local traffic to impede messages upon that line, and with a cable from Port Darwin to Banjoewangie, and from Banjoewangie to Singapore, it would be quite possible for messages to reach Singapore within five or six minutes from the time of leaving Adelaide. Another reason why I am in favor of the line going to Port Darwin is, that we know—experience has now taught us—the nature of the sea bottom between Banjoewangie and Port Darwin—we know exactly now the nature of the sea bottom; and the few interruptions after all that we have had upon that line are not of such a character as to lead us to believe that interruptions will be more frequent in the future. Some of the dangers having been discovered, will be avoided. I do not know whether you wish me to go fully into the matter, because perhaps I am answering the questions rather fully.

335. No, we wish the information fully?—I wish to state, as briefly as I can, why I recommend the duplicate cable going to Port Darwin. I need not tell you that the greater the number of repetitions, the greater the probability of error, and, therefore, it is desirable that in your land line and in your cable you should have as few repetitions as possible. I have already pointed out, with regard to our land line, that we can transmit messages without any hand repeating from Adelaide to Port Darwin by means of an automatic translator at the Alice Springs, midway between the two places; and, having the two cables brought to Banjoewangie, there would be only one repetition between Port Darwin and Singapore; in every way, therefore, you lessen the liability to mistakes. Any other land line you may select will not only be much longer—in both cases it would be longer than to Port Darwin—for instance, if you take the North-West Cape, North-West Cape to Melbourne is over 3,000 miles, traversing the coast the whole distance; from North-West Cape through Adelaide is between 3,000 or 3,500 or 3,600 miles to Melbourne by telegraph line; but from Port Darwin to Melbourne is a distance of only 2,500 miles, therefore the distance is less by 1,000 miles; and there is no comparison, I must tell you, between the working of a coast line and a line through the dry interior of Australia. To make my meaning quite clear, and to show that I am correct in what I say, the distance between Adelaide and Melbourne is between 500 and 600 miles, and yet I suppose there are not more than fifty or sixty days in the year on which we transmit messages direct between the two capitals by the present coast line, and yet we can transmit through three hundred days in the year over the circuit of Port Darwin