

283. But you do not wish to deprive South Australia of the right she has established to make that line?—I have no wish to deprive South Australia of anything. I think she deserves great credit for what she has done.

284. *By Mr. Mein.*—I assume you mean this: that you think it necessary, in addition to duplication of cable, that there should be a duplication of land lines?—Most decidedly.

285. And you think that that duplication might go by way of the Queensland line terminating at the Norman River?—That would be the best route.

286. And you make that suggestion upon the understanding that the connection between Normantown and Port Darwin should be made at the expense of the southern colonies?—Yes.

287. *By Sir James Wilson.*—You think there is sufficient business to support two distinct cable companies?—At the present time, no; but were the charges reduced, I believe the business would be considerably increased. I would even go further, and recommend the colonies, instead of subsidizing mail steamers, to subsidize ocean cables.

288. That is not the question at all?—One should be substituted for the other; instead of subsidizing mail steamers, subsidize cables heavily, and reduce the charges to a minimum.

289. Do you think there would be sufficient business arise by reducing the cable charges to one-half the existing rates to maintain those two distinct companies?—I think the business would be considerably increased.

290. Would it pay. Could the companies exist with a reduction of half the rates upon the cables if there were two distinct companies?—Not unless they were subsidized.

291. Each subsidized, of course?—Each.

292. Do you think it would be cheaper to subsidize one than to subsidize two distinct companies for the same purpose?—I think the most equitable way would be to subsidize the two companies. I think the present company deserves every encouragement.

293. Do you know what loss it would be to the present company—the cable company—if their charges were reduced to one-half?—I do not know their revenue at present.

294. *By Mr. Burns.*—Are you aware that it is said by the company that a penny a word would be a loss of £1,000 a year revenue to the company?—I have heard so.

295. Supposing a contract was made with this company, do you know would it be in their power to get the prices reduced right through—could they control the other lines?—They could only control their own lines.

296. Could any competing company reduce the charges right through?—They could reduce the charges between Australia and India.

297. You then say the business would increase considerably by the reduction of the charges. To what extent do you think the increase would go?—I could not say. It is impossible to answer that question.

298. I understand you to say that you are in favor of a line by way of Normantown at the expense of the southern colonies?—I am in favor of a line from Normantown *via* Macassar to Singapore and Bangkok, in Siam, which could be connected by a short land line with Moulmein, the extremity of the British Indian system.

299. How far are your land lines at the present time from Thursday Island?—About 350 miles.

300. Is any extension projected at the present time other than that required for cable purposes?—There was an amount placed upon the Queensland estimates last year to extend to Thursday Island.

301. Irrespective of whether the cable is made or not?—Yes.

302. *By Sir James Wilson.*—Your land line terminates at Normantown, on the Gulf of Carpentaria?—Yes, and at Cooktown, upon the east coast.

303. How far is Normantown from the nearest point of the trans-continental line by land?—I do not know exactly, but I think about 650 miles. It may be less.

304. If a connection between those two lines were made, would you recommend their being connected by land, or would you recommend a cable across the Gulf of Carpentaria to the Roper River?—I recommend a cable from Normantown to the Roper River.

305. Across the Gulf?—Across the Gulf.

306. How many miles do you think that is?—Four hundred miles.

307. Why do you recommend that?—There is a good bed for a cable, and the shores of Carpentaria are very low, and liable to be submerged during the rainy season to some hundreds of miles perhaps.

308. That is contemplating a land line?—Yes; and in the event of interruptions it would be very difficult to repair the land line.

309. Are there any ranges or rising ground upon which you could make that land line?—The high land is too far back from the coast. It is 100 miles back from Normantown.

310. Do you think the bed of the Gulf of Carpentaria is adapted for a cable?—Admirably adapted. It consists of mud and sand.

311. There is no coral reef?—No.

312. *By Mr. Mein.*—What is the distance from Cooktown to Cape York?—About 350 miles.

313. You gave as a reason why the southern colonies should contribute solely to the expense of connecting Normantown and Port Darwin that you thought Queensland had done already enough; what do you mean?—I think the southern colonies would reap the most benefit of the extension.

314. What do you mean by Queensland having done enough?—I think Queensland has spent enough upon her line to Carpentaria. It was originally intended for international purposes.

315. *By the Chairman.*—How long is that line?—From Cardwell to the Gulf shore 400 miles.

316. Does it accommodate any colonial interests?—It does local interests.

317. It does?—We should not have built a line at that time for other than international purposes.

318. *By Mr. Mein.*—It was not constructed with a view to local interests whatever?—Not at all; entirely for international purposes.

319. *By Mr. Burns.*—Does it now serve local purposes?—It does; but the section beyond Cardwell does not pay. We lose about £3,000 a year.

320. Do you lose more upon that section than others?—Yes.

321. *By the Chairman.*—Do you think a few competing lines would make them pay in the colony?—We are sending telegrams cheaper than any country in the world. We send 1,600 miles for a shilling for ten words. It is perfectly absurd.