

mission of urgent telegrams at double rates, and others had not yet decided to do so. It was probable that the uniform telegraph regulations adopted at Adelaide would also come into operation simultaneously with the reduced rates. In relation to the proposal that the United Kingdom should contribute to the subsidies and guarantees in connection with the cable rates, endeavours were made to induce the United Kingdom to join, but without success. No doubt in some cases some colonies would receive greater advantages than others; but then there was the greater call for the patriotism and splendid spirit that pervades the whole of the race. He expressed his personal delight at the presence of Mr. Unmack, and that New Zealand, which was not represented at Adelaide, was represented on the present occasion; and he thought they should now come to a satisfactory understanding. One of their principal objects was to consider the draft agreement, and another was to take advantage of the presence of the New Zealand and Queensland delegates, to try and influence them to manifest that spirit of federation which they possessed, to form a great national feature in the history of Australia by joining in the cable guarantee and subsidy. There would be other matters to consider, one of which was the question of sending delegates, in response to the invitation of the Home Government, to the Postal Conference to be held in Vienna in May next. No doubt each member would be prepared with a programme of his own, and there might be a number of less important matters to be considered; but whatever was submitted, he was sure, would receive the attention it deserved.

The Hon. J. Gavan Duffy said that the work of the Conference divided itself into two classes—viz., those matters which involved questions of public policy, and those which were of a more purely technical nature. He would suggest that all these technical questions might be better dealt with, in the first place, by the heads of the departments as a sub-committee. That sub-committee would report to the Conference, and the questions then be dealt with by the whole of the delegates. He took it that the first business was the question of the agreement with the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company, and what position Queensland and New Zealand were now prepared to take in the matter. Next to that was the question of the Vienna Conference. If they accepted the invitation they would then have to consider how they were to be represented, and what instructions should be given to the representatives about entering the Postal Union—in short, whether they would enter it at all, and, if so, on what terms. Then, there was the question of the uniformity of postage throughout Australasia. He was of opinion that the time had arrived when all the colonies should have a uniform postage-rate of 1d. per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. By a uniform rate he meant that a letter placed in a post-office in Victoria for Western Australia should bear the same stamp as a letter posted in Tasmania for Queensland. Then there was the question of the newspapers. That was in an anomalous condition at present. It would be well to arrive at an understanding so as to get some general principle laid down. He would be glad to see all *bona fide* newspapers pass free, as they were to a great extent public educators; but he did not know whether the fiscal circumstances of the colonies would allow of that being done at present. There was another matter that would more properly come under the consideration of the heads of the department—that was the detention of the mail-steamers at Adelaide. In Victoria they had numerous complaints that the train-service in Adelaide was run so as to cause the mail-steamers considerable delay. However, that was a small matter, and Sir John Bray could bring it to a settlement. Then there was the question of the intercolonial telegraphic rates. Some decision had been arrived at on this in Adelaide, but had not been carried into effect; and the question was whether the propositions then carried, or some modification of them, might not be carried into effect now, so that all the regulations on the subject might be uniform. In Victoria the address was not counted as part of the message. In other countries it was counted. From a departmental view it would be wise to arrange that, without increasing the cost, the address should be charged for. If the senders had to pay they would shorten the names and addresses without leading to confusion, and thus save a great deal of departmental work. Then there was the matter of the Canadian mail-service. Although this did not affect Victoria, they recognised that they were part of the great State of Australasia, and that the federation of Australasia was the great thing before men's minds, so they would not stand in the way of a fair arrangement if they were fairly met in other matters. This Canadian mail-service would be important from an Imperial point of view, as it would be entirely within the British Empire, and it would not, he presumed, touch foreign countries at any part. If Victoria was fairly met by the Imperial Government and the colonies it would be willing. There were a number of other little things that would come up, and no doubt other gentlemen had questions to raise. If they could get them all brought forward, then they would have an idea of how to arrange the business.

The Hon. J. G. Ward said that, as Mr. Duffy desired to know the position of New Zealand, he would state it. New Zealand would only be too glad to join the Postal Union. If the whole of the colonies entered the Union it would be much better. Uniformity was what they were all aiming at. The matter of being represented at the Conference in Vienna had occupied the attention of the New Zealand Government, and it had been decided to be represented. The most important matter was undoubtedly the agreement which had been submitted in connection with the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company. He felt sorry in any way to damp the sentiment expressed by the President, but he was afraid that New Zealand could not see its way to enter into that agreement, as it meant an additional increase to New Zealand, and, beyond that, a loss to the revenue of £16,000 per annum. He understood that the agreement would be binding for a number of years.

The President said that it would be only binding for one year.

The Hon. J. G. Ward said that he also understood that there was a clause which would prohibit any arrangement being made with any other company.

The President said that the clause referred to had been struck out.

The Hon. J. G. Ward said that New Zealand desired as far as possible to co-operate with all the other colonies for carrying out a fresh arrangement in connection with the cable service; but there