

was one matter which they should keep before them—there was the possibility of the Pacific cable being laid. It was very important to have a dual cable; and, therefore, New Zealand hesitated to enter into such a binding contract as the one referred to.

The President said that it was only for one year.

The Hon. J. G. Ward said that under those circumstances he would take time and consider it, and, if necessary, communicate with his colleagues as to whether they thought it desirable to enter in for a year. He was prepared to refer the altered agreement of one year to his colleagues. On the other hand, the question whether the course proposed would have a detrimental effect on the owners of existing services was not their business. If there was a prospect of reduced cable charges being got by any other route, it would be well to keep that in view, and not do anything calculated to prevent that being brought about. If this was the case, and they entered into an arrangement with the Eastern Extension Company, it was possible that the effort made to establish a Pacific cable might be stopped. He understood that the Colony of Queensland was in a similar position to New Zealand, and he should like to know what the intentions of the Queensland representatives were, as the two colonies had formerly acted on the same lines. In reference to the matter of the addresses and signatures of inland and intercolonial telegrams, they had a practice in New Zealand of limiting the number of words sent free to ten. Personally, he was against the proposal made to have the names and addresses charged for, as their practice had been found to work well.

Sir John Bray said that Mr. Todd had drawn up a schedule showing the loss to the various colonies on an assumption that there was no increase in business, and, secondly, on the assumption of an increase of 5 per cent. He would lay the paper on the table.

The President said that if a representative were sent to the Vienna Conference he could neither speak nor vote. It would be well, perhaps, to have one representative. As far as he was concerned, he did not care where the representative was sent from, and he could, at the most, only listen.

The Hon. J. G. Ward said he thought the President had a letter asking that the various colonies should be represented.

The President said that there was nothing to prevent each colony sending a representative, but he thought one could represent them all.

## *2. Representation on the Vienna Congress.*

The Hon. J. Gavan Duffy moved, That, in the opinion of this Conference, it is advisable that the colonies should accept the invitation to send representatives to the Vienna Congress, and that it be an instruction to the representatives that these colonies will enter and become members of the Postal Union upon certain conditions: the conditions being, in the first place, that these colonies should have two representatives, and not one as was recently proposed, and also that it be an instruction to our representatives that the colonies enter the Postal Union upon the distinct understanding that no reduction be made in the sea-transit rate before the next quinquennial meeting. It would be advisable that the colonies should have two representatives, and for that purpose he would propose that the colonies should be grouped in two groups—viz., 1st. Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, and Tasmania; and 2nd. New Zealand, New South Wales, and Queensland. As they were going to demand two representatives, it would be necessary to have at least two representatives at the Congress. It was manifestly absurd that the little States represented in the Postal Union should have the full power of voting with Australia if we entered the Postal Union. He was not sure that it would be a very great advantage to do so, but they would be willing to do so to make themselves one with civilised nations. Some of those States had a post-office of some sort, but if asked to subsidise a mail service to the extent of £70,000, the national exchequer would become bankrupt. It was absurd that such little States like Servia should be put on a par with us. With two representatives from the colonies, the British Empire, which did the greatest postal business of the world, would only have six representatives in all. Of course, if a difficulty arose, it might be wise to empower the representatives to make concessions, but in the first place they should endeavour to get a dual representation. Germany, which till recently had no general mail service, was anxious to reduce the maritime transit rates from 15 francs to 1 franc per kilogramme, which would be simple ruin to the colonies who paid subsidies; so that if the colonies agreed to enter the Postal Union provision should be made against this. The colonies could withdraw at any time from the Union by giving a year's notice. If the inland powers who had no maritime mails pressed unfairly upon the colonies they could withdraw; therefore, it would be only in the form of an experiment. Of course, until the reduced postage of 2½d. was obtained, it would have been an absolute loss to join. The most distinct advantage would be that whenever they wanted to make an agreement they could evade the cost of a separate convention, and do it by means of the Postal Union. This had been found to be a great advantage to all civilised nations with postal business.

The Hon. J. G. Ward seconded the resolution. There was no chance of each colony getting a representative, but he thought they might get two for Australasia. Wherever they were selected from they would voice the feeling of Australasia. He felt sure that the resolution would be carried unanimously, and that the best results would come from it. It would make them rank amongst the nations of the other portions of the habitable globe, and if anything unjust was done they could withdraw; but he did not think they need fear that. They were anxious to assist in the noble enterprise of giving communication through every part of the globe, and if they acted honestly and straightforwardly, as they would do, there need be no doubt that they would be treated in the same way.

The Hon. B. S. Bird said that he was not so satisfied that the colonies had so much to gain by joining the Postal Union as to induce him to enter into it with a spirit of much enthusiasm. On the other hand, he thought it would be so far from a disadvantage that he would agree to join in with the proposal. The question was raised in his mind as to whether they could dictate their own terms