

Government in a short time to bring about postal reforms within the colony which would cause a loss to the revenue of many thousands of pounds. It would not in the face of that be advisable to increase their expenditure by even £16,000 per annum. He could only say that, as far as New Zealand was concerned, they were compelled to stand out of the matter, and it was with a great deal of regret that they found it necessary to do so.

The Hon. D. O'Connor: To say that I am disappointed at the attitude taken by our worthy friends, the representatives of Queensland and New Zealand, would be a very mild expression. I at once recognise the attitude taken, particularly by Mr. Unmack, the Postmaster-General of Queensland, in his elaborate speech in defence of the position of his colony. Competition, of course, in business is at all times a very great thing, but competition at the present time with regard to these cable lines is practically impossible; and I am very much afraid that our friends from Queensland and New Zealand have viewed the representatives of the colonies assembled here (besides themselves) as the representatives of Sir John Pender and Co., instead of the representatives of the Colonies of Australasia. I thought the speech of my honourable friend, Mr. Duffy—so spirited, so full of the electricity of the times in which we live—would have touched the souls of those two gentlemen who represent Queensland and New Zealand, but lest he might have been a little bit too quick for them, I thought at least the judicial utterances of the Hon. Mr. Bird, of Tasmania, who entered in a cold, calm, dispassionate manner into the arguments of the matter, would have shown them that it would be to the advantage of the whole of Australia to unite in this matter. If ever there was an opportunity to join together, now is the time. Now, what is the position of my friend, Mr. Unmack? With an ability that no one will deny, and with a power of which we have had evidence, he set up to defend an ancient heresy. They have taken up a position, and the best thing he could do was to show their consistent inconsistency in standing alone in Australia and saying that no system of communication between Australia and the great outside world will be acceptable unless in the first place it communicate with Queensland. ("No.") That is here in your own document. On the 14th September, 1876, the Executive Council of Queensland, in connection with correspondence from the Secretary of State on the subject of the duplication of cables, passed a resolution to the effect "That the Council are of opinion that the Government should not contribute to the construction of any duplicate cable between Singapore and Australia which is not directly connected with the telegraph lines of this colony." One of the foremost colonies in Australia, in striving for federation, to her credit be it said, was Queensland. Mr. Unmack says this is not a question of federation; but I should like to say that if any evidence were required to show that this is really a question of federation, and if there is any value in a profession, here is a practical test of it. How can you hope to join the colonies together in a Convention, in a homogeneous Government, if, in a matter like this, so small, there is no chance of joining them together? Who has the more to gain or lose in the joining of the colonies I am not going to say, but it has been generally suggested that New South Wales has most to lose. I do not say whether that is true or false. It has been generously said that New South Wales has most to lose. We all understand something about commerce. We know what it is to found business houses, and how many great firms, and inconsiderable firms, in these colonies and in the others have set aside a certain sum in order to establish a business between the various colonies of Australasia. They do not hesitate because it costs them a little. Imagine a man with the power of Mr. Unmack coming here to make an elaborate speech and put his foot on this proposal, and say it is impracticable for him to come into a contract of this kind because it involves a little loss. Let me show you: Supposing not one shilling is returned to the colony, their annual expenditure would amount to £6,900. [Mr. Unmack: "£14,000."] I am speaking now of the guarantee. The subsidy has been virtually left out, because, as Mr. Duffy said, we are prepared to give up something to try to bring you into the proposal with us, into unity with the rest of the colonies, and we are prepared to give up anything in the shape of a subsidy and only ask you for the guarantee. I will now give you the facts: Supposing that not one shilling of increase took place, the whole expenditure to the great Colony of Queensland, with an area bigger than two or three of the small empires of Europe put together, should not come to more than £6,900. If there is 10 per cent. return it comes to £6,300; if 20 per cent., £5,800; if 25 per cent., £5,500; if 33 per cent., £5,000; if 50 per cent., £4,100; if 75 per cent., £2,700; if 100 per cent., £1,363; if 124 per cent., it comes to £24 6s. I am prepared to say, and believe, on the testimony of the best authority that can be found, that this reducing of the cable rates will immediately cause an increase to the business of 50 per cent. [Mr. Duffy: "At least."] We are all representatives of Australia, but business men also, and we know that immediately the facilities are afforded to communicate, and the high tariff is reduced, where we now send five words we will send thirty words. No man can gainsay that. And what are we asked to do now? To join together to enable the company in England to give facilities to the colonies to come closer together in their communication. With all humility, but with all firmness I say it, there is nothing that can by any human possibility, with all the magic power of the Press, do more to bring about a powerful and closer alliance of the colonies than the facilities you afford in the Post Office, and particularly in the telegraph communication. How are we to annihilate the distance that separates Australia from New Zealand unless such facilities are given? Should we not rise above the question of pounds shillings and pence on this great occasion? Mr. Ward, in his nice allusion to New South Wales, told you that when a cable was required between this colony and New Zealand they paid £5,000, and we paid £2,000. Let me tell you that New South Wales, without in any way herself getting any immediate benefit from that, beyond the privilege of communication with the people of New Zealand, helped to establish that communication so as to relieve New Zealand from her isolation; for we had then telegraphic communication with the habitable globe, except New Zealand, and we paid that sum in the spirit of federation; and if it came to £20,000, New South