

the object of those who suggested that the vocabulary should be used was to prevent the abuses of the private code system. I do not, however, think that the whole of the Colonies should be made to suffer for that, and it would be very arbitrary to compel business people to abandon their private codes. I hope the Conference will see its way to enter a protest against the suggested change. In the Colony I represent the mercantile community are strongly opposed to it. I move that the matter be referred to the permanent heads of the departments to report upon.

Mr. COOK seconded the motion, which was carried

*Congratulations.*

Mr. FYSH expressed the sentiments with which the Conference welcomed Mr Ward, and wished him a pleasant voyage.

Mr. WARD, in reply, said I wish to express my sincere thanks for the consideration which has been shown me, and take this opportunity of expressing my sense of the great courtesy and kindness which has been extended to me by the Members of this Conference, who have put themselves out in order to suit my personal convenience. I thank Mr. Fysh for his good wishes, and hope that by the time we meet again no political changes will have caused any of us to be enjoying a quieter life. (Cheers.) I ask Mr. Fysh to be so good as to represent New Zealand in my absence.

Mr. FYSH I accept the duty with pleasure.

*Black Labour on Mail Boats.*

Mr. COOK: Before we separate, I wish to raise the question of the employment of black labour on mail steamers. There is only one Company employing coloured labour on its boats, and that is the P & O Company. They allege, as a reason for the employment of this coloured labour, that white crews cause an infinity of trouble through drunkenness and disobedience. They state they do not employ coloured labour because it is cheaper, but because they can preserve better discipline. Such an assertion is not worthy of a large company like that, and I am inclined to speak very strongly in regard to it. In my opinion, it is no argument at all to say that such reasons are sufficient to induce them to discard white labour. We should employ no labour that will not commingle with our own, and I think it is one of the strongest arguments against the employment of coloured labour that it is not possible for it to live side by side in harmonious relationship with our own. There must be always an impassable barrier between the coloured and white races by reason of the difference in language, and, since it is impossible for them to commingle, we ought to give white men the preference over the others. We should insist strongly that our mails should be carried by those who are of the same flesh and blood as ourselves, and live the same kind of life, and I therefore move—"That it be a condition in any future contracts that mail steamers shall be manned by white labour only."

Mr. WARD I second the resolution, and I may say that I fully agree with the remarks that have fallen from Mr. Cook. It does appear to me that so long as we largely subsidise these steamers, and one line is manned by white and the other by coloured labour, preference should be given to the lines carrying white labour, unless the other lines are prepared to displace their coloured crews. In the colony I represent there is a very strong feeling against paying public money to steamers manned by coolies. I wish to put that feeling on record.

Dr. COCKBURN I desire to support the resolution. The question was raised also at the Conference at Wellington, and I felt there was a strong opinion then forming in the minds of the public, and which has since gained ground daily, that black labour should not be employed on mail boats.

The motion was put and carried.

At 10.25 P.M. the Conference adjourned until the following Wednesday

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WEDNESDAY, 6TH FEBRUARY, 1895.

*Western Australian Mails.*

Sir JOHN FORREST: Sir, I regret I should have to bring before this Conference so prominently a matter which may be said to be a local matter, as affecting the Colony I represent, but the motion I am about to propose is one of very great importance to us, and I am glad to think it will not very injuriously affect any other Colony. I think, therefore, that the members of this Conference will not have any objection to having these proposals embodied in the next mail contract. I understand that the present contract is likely to be extended to the 31st January, 1898, and my proposals are not intended to affect the extension of the present contract up to that date. My desire is that these conditions shall be inserted in any new contract that is agreed to. In the present contract there is a provision that the P & O and Orient mail steamers may call at Fremantle if they desire to. I have never pressed upon them