

Share-dealing by Telegraph Operators.

Hon. J. GAVAN DUFFY said, with reference to share-dealing by employees, that in Victoria any telegraph employee dealing in shares was dismissed, but the public ought to know why. Telegrams respecting shares had been used for personal purposes.

Hon. J. G. JENKINS : Do you allow them to deal in shares as an investment ?

Hon. J. GAVAN DUFFY : No. I move—

“That in the opinion of this Conference telegraph employees should be absolutely prohibited from speculating in shares.”

Hon. J. G. JENKINS seconded the Resolution. But it was a question where speculation began. In South Australia it was discovered that operators dealt in telegrams respecting shares, and gave information of their contents to other people. The department held an inquiry into the matter, which resulted in the loss of some of their most able officers. Wherever they could suppress dealing or speculating in shares by telegraph employees they should do so.

The Resolution was carried.

Ratification of Washington Treaty.

Hon. J. GAVAN DUFFY moved—

“That this Conference recommend to the Governments of Australasia the ratification of the treaty entered into at Washington at the last Universal Postal Congress.”

He said : After reading the very able report of the Permanent Heads, especially considering the limited time at their disposal, regarding the various points in connection with the treaty, he thought the Conference could fairly recommend that it be ratified. (Hear, hear.)

Hon. J. G. JENKINS seconded, and said it had been made evident by the reports of the Permanent Heads that the material alterations suggested were profitable ones as far as the Australasian Colonies were concerned.

The motion was agreed to.

The Conference then adjourned until 10-30 A.M. on Monday.

MONDAY, 4TH APRIL.

Canadian Three Cents Postal Rate.

The PRESIDENT said : Before they proceeded to the business on the Agenda paper he had to call the attention of the Conference to a cable message that he, at their request, despatched a few days ago to the Postmaster-General of Canada, and to the reply which he had received by cable late on Sunday evening from Ottawa. The message which he despatched to Ottawa read as follows :—

To the Hon. the Postmaster-General, Ottawa, Canada.

I am directed by the Australian Postal Conference, sitting at Hobart, to inquire if it is intended to carry out the proposed reduction of postage from five cents to three cents, and to inform you of the objection of Australasia to concur in the proposition.

It was dated April 1 ; and to it he had received the following reply :—

Canada would welcome inter-Imperial uniform reduced preferential postal rates, but if that plan not approved of hopes she may be allowed, at her own expense, to reduce her out-going letter rate to all parts of the Empire, conceding like freedom of action to all other portions of Empire. Having regard to Canada's geographical and commercial position, existing postal rates constitute serious grievance. Meantime Canada has suspended all action pending approaching Postal Conference at London.—W. MULLOCK, *Postmaster-General*.

Hon. J. GAVAN DUFFY moved—

“That the cable reply from the Postmaster-General of Canada be received, and that the Conference resolve into Committee to consider the same.”

He understood that the Postal Conference now sitting in London required to know what Australasia was going to do in the matter. It would therefore be necessary to formulate the objections of this Conference to Canada's proposals.

Hon. J. G. JENKINS seconded, and the motion was agreed to, and the Conference resolved into Committee.

The Committee, after deliberation, submitted the following Report to the Conference :—

“That the various Agents-General delegates to the Postal Conference in London be instructed to oppose the proposal to reduce the rate of postage to all parts of the British Empire from 2½d. per ½oz. to 2d., and also the Canadian proposal to reduce her outgoing rate from 5c. per ½oz. to 3c. per 1oz., for the following reasons :—(1.) The present rate is not an unreasonably high one, having in view the large cost to the colonies involved in the maintenance of the present means of postal communication with the various portions of the Empire. (2.) Because of the anomaly which would be created by carrying letters 14,000 miles for the same rate as now charged for delivery