

Hon. JOSEPH COOK : The hon. member says "breaks," not "interruptions."

Hon. J. G. JENKINS : No ; interruptions. In 1897 the returns showed that the breaks in the overland line between Adelaide and Port Darwin were only four. If 1000 messages had to be sent through, and New South Wales had to wait, that would be delay, but not an interruption. He read a list of items of breakages in the line which had taken place in 1897. The South Australian Government recognised that they had had a very good return for the line they had constructed ; but they had already expended within their own territory over £100,000, and had provided for another expenditure of £30,000 to put the same in better repair. As to their line from Port Darwin, nearly all the interruptions were caused by floods and hurricanes ; and it was proposed by the South Australian Government to construct a double line, as they were advised that such would avoid many of the present interruptions and breakages, being most anxious to get over these interruptions. His Government recognised the friendly spirit displayed by the other Colonies, and felt that if South Australia went to a large expense in duplicating the line or adopting an alternative route in the worst places, the other Colonies would not hesitate to compensate them for their enterprise. He would say, without binding the other Colonies, whilst trusting to their support, the South Australian Government had agreed to incur an expenditure of £50,000 to £60,000 to duplicate the wire to Port Darwin at places that were so dangerous, and when that was done, and the other Colonies had duplicate lines through their territories also, duplicate messages would be sent direct from Port Darwin to Melbourne and Sydney without re-transmission.

Hon. JOSEPH COOK : When will that be done ?

Hon. J. G. JENKINS : I cannot say exactly. Sir Charles Todd tells me that everything is ready to send for the material. If that is the case we should have the line duplicated during the present year.

Hon. JOSEPH COOK : What about the other arrangement about duplexing ?

Hon. J. G. JENKINS : The duplexing could be done at once.

Sir CHARLES TODD : The duplex will be working both ways in the same manner within the next two months.

Hon. JOSEPH COOK : We expect to have our line completed to Deniliquin in about six months.

Sir CHARLES TODD explained that frequently hours of delay between Adelaide and Sydney arose through the pressure on one line.

Motion put and passed.

Hon. JOSEPH COOK moved—

"This Conference has heard with satisfaction from the Representative of South Australia of the intention of his Government to take immediate steps for the improvement of the overland telegraph line, and urges him to impress upon his Government to lose no time in effecting the improvements suggested, and hoping the West Australian Government will take similar steps with regard to their overland line."

Hon. J. GAVAN DUFFY seconded. He was sure they had all heard with great satisfaction what the Hon. the Minister from South Australia had stated. No doubt his Government, having put their hands to the plough, would not look back, but carry the work through, so that the complaints now made in Melbourne and Sydney would not continue. He was sorry Western Australia was not represented at the Conference ; but they trusted she would take similar steps in her territory, and thus secure an effective service right over the continent.

Motion put and passed.

*Thanks.*

Hon. JOSEPH COOK said that as the business of the Conference was completed, he had several votes of thanks to move. In the first place, he wished to move a cordial vote of thanks to the President for the courtesy, urbanity, and wisdom with which he had guided their deliberations.

Hon. J. G. JENKINS seconded the motion. He wished to endorse all that had been said regarding the capable manner in which the President had discharged his duties. It would not be out of place if he paid a tribute to the hospitality of the Tasmanian people.

Hon. J. R. DICKSON heartily concurred in what had been said by the previous speaker.

Hon. J. GAVAN DUFFY said he believed that the business had been conducted with all necessary decorum.

The motion was unanimously agreed to.

The PRESIDENT, in thanking them for the vote that had been passed, said it was a pleasure to meet the representatives from the other Colonies. That Conference might possibly be their last one, but against that one regret there would be, he hoped, the lasting pleasure of the consummation of Federation, the great destiny that they were all looking forward to, when the Colonies would be one in commerce, with one postage stamp.