

No. 163.

The Hon. the PREMIER, Melbourne, to the Hon. the PREMIER, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

Melbourne, 19th February, 1900.

Re Extension Company's proposals: Premiers' Conference favoured granting terminal facilities only when Pacific cable is laid. That arrangement will not insure monopoly to Pacific cable, but will fully safeguard it. It was further suggested at Conference that views of Australasian representatives on Pacific Board be ascertained. No decision arrived at to defer action until their reply received. Victorian Government prepared assist any movement calculated to expedite Pacific undertaking.

No. 164.

The Hon. the PREMIER, Ottawa, to the Hon. the PREMIER, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

Ottawa, 20th February, 1900.

CANADIAN Government consider granting terms proposed to Eastern Telegraph Company, even when Pacific cable laid, will seriously affect financial prospects and impair usefulness Pacific-cable scheme. Action proposed material alteration condition fixed by Governments former Pacific-cable partnerships, and may endanger scheme. Hope no change without consent of every partner.

No. 165.

The Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington, to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Brisbane.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 23rd February, 1900.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your printed letter of the 1st instant, drawing attention to the proposals of the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company to lay a cable between Australia and Cape Colony on certain conditions, and to thank you for the copy of the report of your department on the matter and the printed extract from the *Brisbane Courier* of the 31st ultimo.

I have, &c.,

J. G. WARD, Postmaster-General.

The Hon. J. G. Drake, Postmaster-General, Brisbane.

No. 166.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the PREMIER.

(Telegram.)

London, 24th February, 1900.

If possible, will you get Victoria, New South Wales Governments defer concluding agreement with Eastern Telegraph Company few days longer? Even short time valuable. I am moving here.

No. 167.

The Hon. the PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 25th February, 1900.

PRESS cablegram from New South Wales states that that colony has definitely decided to accept the Eastern Telegraph Company's terms. Have cabled to Premier of Victoria strongly urging that the matter be left open for a few days until the Pacific Cable Board has reported. [No. 170.]

No. 168.

The Hon. the PREMIER, Wellington, to the Hon. the PREMIER, Ottawa.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 25th February, 1900.

PRESS cablegram here to effect that Premier New South Wales stated definitely had decided agree Eastern Company's terms. Have wired Victoria and New South Wales urging matter remain in abeyance until Pacific Cable Board's opinion on situation received.

No. 169.

The Hon. the PREMIER, Wellington, to the Hon. the PREMIER, Sydney.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 25th February, 1900.

PRESS cablegram states that you have definitely agreed to accept Eastern Company's conditions. Hope that this is not correct, and that before definitely agreeing you will wait a few days to obtain opinion of Pacific Cable Board on the situation.

No. 170.

The Hon. the PREMIER, Wellington, to the Hon. the PREMIER, Melbourne.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 25th February, 1900.

LEARN from Press cablegram that Premier New South Wales says that, as far as his colony is concerned, it has definitely made up its mind to accept Eastern Telegraph Company's conditions. If such is the case I regret it very much, as we are all partners in the Pacific-cable scheme. I would strongly urge you to refrain from committing your colony until Pacific Cable Board in London has reported. There can surely be no great urgency. I hope I am not going too far in urging that the position be allowed to remain *in statu quo* for few days.