

No. 51.

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

(Telegram.)

Brisbane, 23rd January, 1901.

REFERRING to your telegram of 20th instant, I have already advised Premier of Victoria as follows: "Re agreement with Eastern Extension Company: Although Government of Queensland could not reasonably object to the action taken by those States which were not parties to agreement respecting Pacific cable, they most decidedly object to any State which has virtually entered into a partnership with Queensland, Canada, New Zealand, and Imperial Government for the joint ownership of Pacific cable granting any concession to Eastern Extension Company, which must be detrimental to owners of Pacific cable, for the purpose of securing a temporary advantage. Our position in this matter is supported by the telegram of Secretary of State to Governor of Victoria of 25th February last, page 41 of correspondence published by Victorian Government, and the further telegram of the Secretary of State of 5th May last, published at page 49 same correspondence. Moreover, I consider it unfortunate that precipitate action should have been taken by any of the Australian States concerned, as the matter is one of federal interests, and should have been dealt with by Federal Government."

No. 52.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the PREMIER.

(Telegram.)

London, 28th January, 1901.

HAVE written to Colonial Office expressing dissatisfaction New South Wales Government entering into agreement with Eastern Telegraph Company. Agent-General for Government Queensland shares in view. Secretary of State for Colonies arranging for meeting of Pacific Cable Board, give the matter full consideration.

No. 53.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the PREMIER.

Westminster Chambers, 13, Victoria Street, London, S.W.,

30th January, 1901.

SIR,—

I beg herewith to transmit copy of cablegrams and correspondence which have been supplied to me by the Colonial Office relative to the action taken by the New South Wales Government in entering into the agreement referred to therein with the Eastern Telegraph Company.

I also attach copy of my letter to the Colonial Office, expressing regret that such action had been taken, and expressing my willingness to co-operate in any step which might be taken to bring about a reconsideration of the matter.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

W. P. REEVES.

Enclosure 1 in No. 53.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Colonial Office, Downing Street, S.W., 23rd January, 1901.

I am directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to transmit to you, for your information and for the information of the New Zealand Government, copy of a telegram which has been received from the Officer Administering the Government of New South Wales, on the subject of the agreement entered into by the Government of that State with the Eastern Telegraph Company.

I am, &c.,

The Agent-General for New Zealand.

H. BERTRAM COX.

Sub-enclosure 1 in Enclosure 1 in No. 53.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN to the OFFICER ADMINISTERING the GOVERNMENT of NEW SOUTH WALES.

(Telegram.)

Downing Street, 8th January, 1901.

REFERRING to my telegram of the 2nd July, Canadian Government are informed that New South Wales will probably accept proposals of Eastern Telegraph Company. Presume that this is not correct, and that matter will be kept open till Pacific Cable Board is in position to deal with it.

Sub-enclosure 2 in Enclosure 1 in No. 53.

The OFFICER ADMINISTERING the GOVERNMENT of NEW SOUTH WALES to Mr. CHAMBERLAIN.

(Telegram.)

Sydney, 17th January, 1901.

REFERRING to your telegram of 8th January, my Ministers advise that Pacific Cable Board has no power to deal with any matter affecting Post Office except Pacific cable. Our Post Office will probably pass to Federal Government at the end of next month, when cable-rates would necessarily be uniform. At present this State pays 4s. 11d. per word, while the adjoining State pays 3s. 6d. Paving the way for uniformity in the Federal service, my Government has entered into agreement with Eastern Extension Company for uniformity of rate from 1st February.