

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.

No. 171.

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

(Telegram.)

Sydney, 26th February, 1900.

HAVE not yet accepted company's offer, but as now altered we can secure cheaper rates without giving company any advantage over Pacific cable. Whatever advantage there is will be with the Pacific cable.

No. 172.

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

(Telegram.)

Melbourne, 1st March, 1900.

PACIFIC cable: *Re* your cablegram of 25th ultimo, New South Wales and Victorian Governments have practically agreed on basis of arrangements with Eastern Extension Company. Report of Pacific Cable Board just received. Have not had time to consult Mr. Lyne as to its effects on previous arrangements. I propose doing so at once.

No. 174.

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

(Telegram.)

Sydney, 2nd March, 1900.

EASTERN Extension proposals: Seems some misapprehension. We are ready and anxious to carry out our undertaking Pacific cable. Admitted all sides this cannot be completed for three years, probably more. Meantime Eastern Extension offer immediate reduction of rates to four shillings, or about sixteen per cent., and by sliding scale coming three years to two shillings and sixpence as business increases; also, lay cable Cape to Adelaide, and then reduce present excessive Cape rates from seven shillings and threepence to two shillings and sixpence word. No concession asked for or given until Pacific cable completed. They want direct offices so as to compete on equal terms, and in meantime any reduction whatever to remain until Pacific cable laid. Our present agreement terminates thirtieth April, and if no fresh one made company can instead of reducing rates increase them up to eight shillings word.

No. 175.

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

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 3rd March, 1900.

Re your telegram of second instant, respecting Eastern Company's proposals and termination of present agreement: There is nothing to fear as to Eastern Company raising rates. To do so will only recoil upon company. The major question is Pacific cable, in which we are all partners, and we should work in harmony, and there should be no departure unless unanimously agreed to, these being the terms upon which partnership entered on. Past experience Eastern Company vividly demonstrates that has not acted upon philanthropic lines, and reductions now shadowed have only one object in view. Again respectfully and strongly urge you to let matters remain in abeyance until Pacific cable committee has reported on effect concessions to Eastern Company would have upon financial prospect of Pacific cable.

No. 176.

AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA, WESTERN AUSTRALIA, AND TASMANIA WITH THE EASTERN EXTENSION, AUSTRALASIA, AND CHINA TELEGRAPH COMPANY (LIMITED), AS TO THE RATES FOR TRANSMISSION OF AUSTRALASIAN TRAFFIC.

AN AGREEMENT dated the 14th day of April, 1900, and made between the Government of the Colony of South Australia, by the Honourable John Alexander Cockburn, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and Saint George, for and on behalf of the said Government, of the first part; the Government of the Colony of Western Australia, by the Honourable Edward Horne Wittenoom, for and on behalf of the said Government, of the second part; the Government of the Colony of Tasmania, by the Honourable Philip Oakley Fysh, Knight Commander of the said Order, for and on behalf of the said Government, of the third part; and the Eastern Extension, Australasia, and China Telegraph Company (Limited) (hereinafter called "the Extension Company"), of the fourth part.

WHEREAS the colonies parties hereto of the first three parts are hereinafter referred to as "the contracting colonies": And whereas the telegraphic traffic between the contracting colonies, New South Wales, Victoria, New Zealand, Queensland, and New Caledonia, on the one side, and Europe, and when transiting Europe all other countries beyond Europe, on the other side, to be transmitted