

## No. 7.

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

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 18th August, 1903.

New Zealand Government strongly protested against Federal Government ratifying agreement Eastern Extension Company. Have sent to-day the following telegram to Barton:—

“Still urge objection ratification of agreement Eastern Extension Company. Hope matter may stand over until, at all events, Conference partners Pacific cable held. Courtesy and consideration would, I feel sure, tend soften tension existing.”

Firmly of opinion no exigency of Australian States who were original partners Pacific cable would warrant departure intended. To refuse to confer intensifies feeling that other contracting parties being unfairly dealt with.

## No. 8.

The DEPUTY POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Sydney, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

Sydney, 24th October, 1903.

DIRECT communication with South Africa was restored on twelfth instant.

## No. 9.

The Hon. the PRIME MINISTER, Commonwealth of Australia, Melbourne, to the Hon. the PRIME MINISTER, Wellington.

Commonwealth of Australia, Department of External Affairs,  
Melbourne, 18th November, 1903.

SIR,—

In continuation of my letter of the 10th instant [not printed] in which the receipt of yours of the 23rd October [No. 14, F.-8c, 1903] was acknowledged, I have the honour to inform you that I am in receipt of a telegram from the Acting Agent-General for New South Wales in London, one of the representatives of the Commonwealth on the Pacific Cable Board, to the effect that the Colonial Office consider that the subjects for discussion at the Conference in connection with Pacific cable matters should be those which are mentioned in your communication.

I do not anticipate that there will be any difficulty with regard to terminal rates and Customs duties, as the last proposal made by this Government respecting terminal rates goes a very long way towards meeting the wishes of the Board; and this Government has conceded that, though it is not possible to exempt cable material from being charged with Customs duties, all such duties will be refunded to the Board.

Will you be so good as to intimate more precisely the points on which it is hoped that a discussion in regard to the agreement with the Eastern Extension Company will enable the Commonwealth to secure more advantageous terms than those which have been provisionally agreed upon?

With regard to the *personnel* of the Conference, the Colonial Office apparently desire that it should be held in London, and the Secretary of State has intimated that he will personally preside over it. As all these questions have been closely considered by the Cable Board, it would appear that the proceedings at any Conference constituted solely of members of that Board would not be likely to throw any new light upon them. I think it would be advantageous, therefore, if the partners were at liberty to nominate one or two additional representatives. I have telegraphed to London that I have put this suggestion before you, and shall be pleased to learn at the earliest convenient date that it has your concurrence.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Prime Minister, Wellington.

ALFRED DEAKIN.

## No. 10.

The Hon. the PRIME MINISTER, Wellington, to the Hon. the PRIME MINISTER, Commonwealth of Australia, Melbourne.

SIR,—

Prime Minister's Office, Wellington, 29th December, 1903.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th ultimo on the subject of the Conference which is to be held in London presently in connection with Pacific cable matters.

I note that you have received from the Acting Agent-General for New South Wales a telegram announcing that the Colonial Office considers that the subjects for discussion should be those mentioned in my letter of the 23rd October last.

With reference to the question in the third paragraph of your letter, I desire to repeat that New Zealand disapproves altogether of the proposed agreement between the Commonwealth and the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company. Briefly, I am of opinion that the discussion should show that the agreement is one which should not in the interest of the Pacific cable be ratified—certainly not without the consent of all the partners. That the agreement practically binds the Commonwealth to a period of thirteen years, assuring to the company during that time all the material advantages in business rivalry secured by the right to have separate offices and to deal with the public directly at the principal centres in Australia, besides allotting special wires for international traffic handled by the company, which, in my opinion, would seriously interfere with the business and success of the State-owned cable.

Regarding the *personnel* of the Conference, I may say that this Government is quite satisfied to have the colonies represented by their Agents-General.

I have, &c.,

R. J. SEDDON.

The Hon. the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia, Melbourne.