

Fifteenth Day.
14 May 1907.

MAIL SERVICE
TO AUSTRALIA
AND NEW
ZEALAND *via*
CANADA.

(Sir
Joseph Ward.)

We come to the point of the project of bringing the outlying possessions into touch. This is all-important. We have been talking about emigration schemes and of subscribing large sums of money for the purpose of assisting emigrants going from the British Islands out to Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. If you gave them the opportunity of third-class accommodation at low rates upon those steamers of going with this speed to these countries it would be a good thing. Canada has the inestimable advantage of being very much closer in that respect, and to some extent it would minimise its importance to them, but speed, of course, is a very important element to Canada. From our point of view, instead of spending anything for emigration, we would one hundred thousand times rather give it as a matter of practical business to a fast service to bring our countries within three weeks of London. Supposing this service were to cost probably 300,000*l.* or 400,000*l.* a year by way of subsidy.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : Do you mean in the aggregate ?

Sir JOSEPH WARD : Yes, between the whole of us.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : Not with a 20-knot service. I am afraid that does not agree with my information.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : To-day you have got running, and for many years have had running, from London to Australia through the Suez Canal, a weekly steamship service between two lines of steamers, a fortnightly one by each company, and by that route as far as your subsidies went, for under 180,000*l.* a year. Australia has entered into a contract, I understand, for less.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : There is a pretty big trade there—that is the difference.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : Well, it is a passenger and mail service—there is very little cargo.

Sir WILLIAM LYNE : And a weekly trade.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : A weekly trade. I understand a contract has been entered into by Australia for 125,000*l.* a year, I do not know whether I am right in the figures.

Mr. DEAKIN : That was the figure, 125,000*l.*

Sir JOSEPH WARD : If we are going to aim at getting something superior in the way of speed to bring these countries together you cannot hope to get a fast service unless you pay for it.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : How many knots would that be ? Is not that a 15 knots service ?

Sir JOSEPH WARD : The new service ?

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : No. The service you are referring to now, that we are subsidising through the Suez Canal.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : They run about 15 knots, I believe.