

*9th Day.]*

DEVELOPMENT OF TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION. [15 June, 1911.

Mr. FISHER: I would like to know whether the passing of this Resolution alone commits the Governments to this scheme, and I should like to hear more about it first.

Mr. PEARCE: The only financial responsibility we would be committed to would be Singapore.

Mr. SAMUEL: Part, not the whole, and also to the establishment of such a station in Australia as would link up with the next station on the chain.

Sir JOSEPH WARD: That would be the Fremantle station, I presume—extended, perhaps.

CHAIRMAN: To link up with Singapore.

Mr. FISHER: I want to be quite clear on this matter. We are quite willing to co-operate in every possible way, but this matter rather belongs to an expert committee before I should agree to involve the Commonwealth in a monetary obligation. These things cannot be done hurriedly. Passing a resolution of this kind will express the views we hold as to co-operation with you, but to approve a scheme which has not been fully considered would be unwise.

Sir JOSEPH WARD: Everything we are doing here, as far as I am concerned (I made that quite clear before, and I repeat it now), and I think you are in the same position, is subject to the ratification of our Parliaments.

Mr. FISHER: Yes, but I say the scheme is not complete enough from my point of view; I want to see more of a scheme of this character in detail before I can commit the Commonwealth financially to it.

Mr. BRODEUR: I understand it is not embodied in the resolution proposed by Mr. Samuel.

Mr. SAMUEL: We circulated yesterday to all the members of the Conference a memorandum on the subject, but that memorandum also does not go closely into financial estimates.

Mr. FISHER: I do not want to say it, but we have, as a Government, lost a considerable amount of money by following advice that came from an excellent source; it has been embarrassing and inefficient advice, and we shall certainly not agree to financially assist a scheme which we have not got our experts to examine and report upon. Otherwise the proposition is all right.

Sir D. DE VILLIERS GRAAFF: We support this scheme, sir. We think it is a capital idea, and, I may say, I am glad to hear that South Africa is to be joined in at a later period. If a high-power station is placed at Aden, it is quite possible, by erecting another high-power station at the Victoria Falls, or some other convenient position, we would be able to come into the chain of communication. The Union Government will be quite prepared to consider the advisability of it, so soon as the high-power station, which has been foreshadowed by Mr. Samuel, has been erected at Aden. We support the idea of the scheme, and I am sorry that we cannot at once come into the same line of communication—that we cannot be connected with the whole at once, but the Government would be prepared to consider, and I think favourably, erecting a station in a suitable position to communicate with Aden, which will also put us then in the line of communication.

Sir JOSEPH WARD: May I just say on the point raised by Mr. Fisher—and perhaps Mr. Samuel will correct me if I am wrong—that I understand that the