

15 June, 1911.] DEVELOPMENT OF TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION.

[9th Day.

Sir JOSEPH WARD—*cont.*

proposal for the establishment of the six wireless stations which you named outside of Singapore, which is a necessary connection for transmitting the wireless messages from Australia and New Zealand and from this end from India; the British Government carry out the other stations.

Mr. SAMUEL: And the Indian Government.

Sir JOSEPH WARD: They bear the cost of providing the stations and the maintenance and working of them.

Mr. SAMUEL: Yes, that is with regard to the capital expenditure for establishing the stations, but as these stations will be links in the chain, the working of the scheme must be viewed as a whole, and the suggestion is that the working expenses should be pooled, and that the receipts should also be pooled, and any profit or loss be divided under an equitable scheme to be agreed upon.

Sir JOSEPH WARD: Australia is in a similar position to New Zealand, and we are establishing high-power stations now. At Fremantle, I understand, it is a station to carry messages distances of about 1,000 miles. The difference between a high-power station and a station carrying messages 1,000 miles under ordinary conditions ought to be the work of Australia, just as in New Zealand the work of providing our stations for carrying messages a long distance is our work. I understand your proposition is that after we have established our high-power stations, our profits or our losses are to be included in the link of suggested wireless stations right round, including Australia.

Mr. SAMUEL: It will probably be necessary to distinguish between the work which is done by these stations for local purposes and the work which is done in the transmission of messages between the United Kingdom or India, and Australia or New Zealand.

Sir JOSEPH WARD: The feeling I have, in reply to Mr. Samuel's question, is that if it were possible it would be more satisfactory to say that we were to bear the capital cost of our high-power stations and the working of them; that Australia was to bear the capital cost of its Western Australian Station and the working of it; and that we, with the other co-partners you have referred to, should jointly bear the cost of the Singapore Station, and jointly bear a proportion of whatever loss or profit was incurred on that particular station. I foresee that if this system of the chain of wireless stations which you are referring to is established on the basis of our standing in with the working of the whole of them, right over the different portions of the Empire, as a corollary to that proposal it would necessitate the establishment of some Board outside the representative Governments, just as in the case of the Pacific Cable Board. I think there is a little difficulty in that.

Mr. FISHER: Only a little one?

Sir JOSEPH WARD: Certainly not much difficulty, for this reason, that independently of the Empire side of the question, we have out in the southern seas to carry on local work of a different character altogether; we have to carry on a local work, and when you get an important system of stations established for local working and you endeavour to attach that to a system for wide Empire purposes, for general telegraphy, we would not use it very much commercially right over the Empire, but for other purposes it would be invaluable. I think, when the local side is considered, with regard to the uses to which we put our wireless stations, it would be more satisfactory to let us carry out what we require for our local purposes, giving extended limits in that station at Fremantle, for instance, which has been referred to, to enable communication to go to Singapore.