

*9th Day.]*

DEVELOPMENT OF TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION. [15 June, 1911.

Sir JOSEPH WARD—*cont.*

independent of submarine cables.” The suggestion now is as an alternative : “ That the great importance of wireless telegraphy for social, commercial, and defensive purposes renders it desirable that a chain of British State-owned wireless stations should be established within the Empire,” and I have no objection to proposing that.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER : We agree for Canada.

Mr. PEARCE : Of course we support the resolution, but we trust that the Pacific will not be lost sight of in this matter, because it has to be remembered that there are other European countries that possess colonies in the Pacific, and if the Pacific is to be put out of consideration it is just possible that those other countries will not throw away their opportunity. The Committee which sat in Melbourne pointed out that it is known that a certain country was desirous of improving their means of rapid correspondence with their administrative centres, and that they had information that it was their intention to establish radio-telegraphic connections with their colonies. We have to remember that if these wireless stations are to be used for commercial purposes, if the other nations do get in ahead of us, it will have some effect in diverting trade. I was rather disappointed to hear Mr. Samuel say that the Admiralty did not consider the Pacific stations would be of any value for naval purposes.

Mr. SAMUEL : A chain right across.

Mr. PEARCE : Because at the Conference at Melbourne the Admiralty was represented by Lieutenant Fanshawe, and besides him there were Captain Tickell, Mr. Logan, Superintendent of Electric Lines, New Zealand, the Honourable Eyre Hutson, Colonial Secretary of Fiji, Mr. Milward, Manager of the Pacific Cable Board, and the Commonwealth Representatives, Sir John Quick, the Postmaster-General, Sir Robert Scott, Secretary to the Postmaster-General's Department, Mr. John Hesketh, Chief Electrical Engineer in the same Department, and Mr. Atlee Hunt. That Committee drew up a secret report dealing with the naval side of the question.

CHAIRMAN : Those considerations will be very present to the minds of the Colonial Office in dealing with the development and further extension of wireless throughout the Pacific when once we have got our main line connecting up the principal parts of the Empire.

Mr. PEARCE : In the meantime we are straining every nerve to maintain the supremacy of British trade with those Pacific Islands, and we look upon this extension of wireless as being a very valuable aid to us. No doubt those who are opposing us in this connection, competing with us, also take the same view, and if we wait too long we may find that they will get in ahead of us. There are, first, one or two other points. With regard to the Conference of next year, I should like to ask Mr Samuel whether it is proposed that the Dominions should be represented at that Conference.

Mr. SAMUEL : Yes, it is proposed.

Mr. PEARCE : Also as regards the station proposed to be erected in Western Australia, has consideration been given to the fact that we at the present time are establishing a station there ?