

P A P E R S

RELATING TO

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION.

No. 1.

MR. F. GISBORNE TO GOVERNOR SIR GEORGE GREY, K.C.B.

6 Duke Street, Adelphi,
London, 15th July, 1862.

SIR,—

I have the honor, on behalf of the Promoters of the Anglo-Australian & China Telegraph, to enclose a printed Statement of the objects for which they have associated themselves ; also Copy of a Document addressed to me, and signed by them, dated the 3rd March last ; also Copy of a Letter dated the 15th instant, addressed to me by Messrs. Forde & Fleeming Jenkin, enclosing Estimates for the construction, working, and maintaining of the Telegraph Line between Java and Brisbane ; also a map showing the Telegraphic System which they propose to carry out, with a view to connecting India with China and Australia. This undertaking comprises—1st. A Submarine Line between India (Rangoon) and Singapore to be extended to Hong Kong ; and, secondly, a Submarine Line between Singapore, or Java, and the terminus of the Telegraph system of Australia, which at present is at Brisbane ; also a Tariff Table between London and Alexandria.

The promoters are in negotiation with the Government of India as regards the first portion of the undertaking, and Sir Charles Wood gave a deputation of their body, which waited upon him on the 27th ultimo, the most positive assurance, that the link between India and Singapore would be completed, either by Government itself or by aiding a Company, contemporaneously with the carrying out of the Lines to Australia and China.

The promoters hope also to make arrangements with the Dutch Government, to have a Cable of their own between Singapore and Batavia, though that Government sent out forty miles of Cables last February to repair their Line, and there is no doubt that they will have a permanent interest in keeping up that communication efficiently, once that Singapore is connected by Telegraph with India.

The promoters have already the right to have a separate Wire through Java, and to settle the Tariff, in conjunction with the Dutch Government, as far as Singapore. The same powers are reserved to Her Majesty's Government, indeed no Tariff can be settled anywhere between Malta and Java without the assent of Her Majesty's Government. You will know, Sir, that the soundings between Java and Brisbane, along the proposed course, have been taken in the greatest detail almost anywhere, and shew a soft and uniform sea bottom, seldom exceeding fifty fathoms in depth. The Stations also can be so placed as not to be more than 500 to 600 miles apart. The permanent working and maintenance of Telegraph Cables laid under such conditions, does not admit of a doubt.

At this moment more than 3,000 miles of Cable, containing upwards of 5,000 miles of insulated Wire, are successfully at work in shallow water, say within 100 fathoms, the longest being that laid last year between Malta and Alexandria parallel to the African Coast, over a distance of 1,300 nautical miles. Some of these lines have worked eight or ten years, and a large proportion have cost nothing for repairs. The establishment of telegraphic communication between Australia and India will convert the present monthly communication between England and Australia into a weekly communication, and will bring them within, say, sixteen days of one another. When telegraphic communication is re-established between Egypt or Turkey in Asia, and India, the time will be further reduced to, say, a couple of days, or, under proper management, to a few hours.

The results of my visit to Australia in 1860, for the purpose of obtaining subsidies for the Line between Java and Queensland, may be shortly stated as follows :—New South Wales voted a Subsidy of £10,000 a year without requiring the Home Government to contribute ; Victoria voted £13,000 a year, contingent upon the Home Government contributing something ; and the Governments of Tasmania, New Zealand, and Queensland promised proportionate contributions. Subsequently the Government of Victoria made an offer to the Home Government to provide half of the whole Subsidy that might be required, if the Home Government would also provide half. It was understood at the time