

communication between Great Britain, India, and Australasia; which having been put from the chair paragraph by paragraph, and amended in certain particulars, was unanimously agreed to as follows:—

“The Representatives of the Colonies of New South Wales, New Zealand, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia, in Conference assembled, in forwarding to the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonies the resolution attached (which passed the Conference unanimously), desire to impress upon his Lordship their sense of its urgency and importance.

“The Governments of all the Australasian Colonies have taken charge of the lines of telegraphic communication in their respective Colonies. Experience has shown that this course has enabled far greater facilities to be offered to those using the telegraph, and at lower rates, than if the lines had been permitted to pass into private hands, or into the hands of public companies. Her Majesty’s Government have recently acquired the land lines within the United Kingdom; and the Conference believe, from the information they possess, that the change has been attended with success.

“They are of opinion that the arguments which may be used in favour of Governments taking charge of the land lines within their territories, apply with more force to their taking charge of the means of communication between the separate parts of the same Empire.

“The national objects served are too obvious to need comment. It is submitted that they are sufficiently strong to be worthy of consideration, even supposing the communication would have to be maintained at some pecuniary cost.

“But the proposal made by the Conference will in all probability not involve a loss. On the contrary, it may equally be urged on the ground of economy as on that of good government. Her Majesty’s subjects in the United Kingdom, India, and Australasia have now to use the lines in the hands of Joint Stock Companies, who look for rates to yield their shareholders from ten to fifteen per cent. If the Governments acquired the lines, they could obtain money at about four per cent.; besides that, by the use of Her Majesty’s ships the lines could be maintained at less than the present cost of maintenance. The Governments would therefore be able to offer the use of the telegraph at lower rates than Joint Stock Companies are inclined to do. When it is considered how materially telegraphic communication promotes the prosperity of the countries enjoying it, it may without exaggeration be asserted that the proposal made by the Conference is one in the interest of a large portion of Her Majesty’s subjects.

“The Conference would prefer that Her Majesty’s Government should elaborate the details; and they merely throw out as a suggestion, that the Imperial Government, in conjunction with the Governments of India and the Australasian Colonies, should jointly acquire or construct a through line between the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand, and by way of Her Majesty’s Indian Possessions.”

Sir Henry Ayers then moved,—“That as inconvenience is caused through letters to the various Australian Colonies posted for despatch by sea or overland, intercolonially, being charged at different rates of postage, one uniform rate be adopted of threepence for all letters, whether despatched overland or by ship; also, that the several Australian Colonies adopt one uniform rate on parcels and book packets, whether for despatch by sea or overland, intercolonially, viz. :—

				s.	d.
Not exceeding 1 oz.	...	...	...	0	1
1 oz. but not exceeding 2 oz.	...	...	...	0	2
2 oz.	”	$\frac{1}{2}$ lb.	...	0	4
$\frac{1}{4}$ lb.	”	$\frac{1}{2}$ lb.	...	0	8
$\frac{1}{2}$ lb.	”	$\frac{3}{4}$ lb.	...	1	0
$\frac{3}{4}$ lb.	”	1 lb.	...	1	4

and so on, increasing 4d. for each  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. or fraction of  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb.”

After discussion, the motion was amended as follows, and agreed to:—“That as inconvenience is caused through letters to the various Australian Colonies posted for despatch by sea or overland, intercolonially, being charged at different rates of postage, this Conference are of opinion that one uniform rate should be adopted of twopence for all letters, whether despatched overland or by ship; also, that the several Australian Colonies adopt one uniform rate on parcels and book packets, whether for despatch by sea or overland, intercolonially, to come into operation on 1st January, 1874, viz. :—

				s.	d.
Not exceeding 1 oz.	...	...	...	0	1
1 oz. but not exceeding 2 oz.	...	...	...	0	2
2 oz.	”	$\frac{1}{2}$ lb.	...	0	4
$\frac{1}{4}$ lb.	”	$\frac{1}{2}$ lb.	...	0	8
$\frac{1}{2}$ lb.	”	$\frac{3}{4}$ lb.	...	1	0
$\frac{3}{4}$ lb.	”	1 lb.	...	1	4

and so on, increasing 4d. for each  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. or fraction of  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb.”

The Representatives of Tasmania and Western Australia did not vote.

The Representatives of New Zealand also did not vote.

At the same time, they desired it to be recorded that they will recommend the adoption of the resolutions to their Governments.

Mr. Samuel then proposed the following resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Langton, and agreed to:—“That whereas letters which are too late for post are frequently handed to the captains and the passengers of vessels trading between the Australasian Colonies to post at their port of destination, which letters, although they bear the required amount of postage stamps, are subjected to the payment of further postage in the Colony to which they are addressed,—the Conference are of opinion that the captains of vessels should be permitted to have a box or bag for the reception of letters after the post shall have closed, and such letters, provided they bear the proper amount of postage stamps of the Colony in which they originate, including the late fee, shall be received at the Post Offices of the