

## At the Treasury, Sydney, Monday, 10th February, 1873.

*Present :*

<i>New South Wales :</i>	The Hon. Henry Parkes. The Hon. Saul Samuel.	<i>South Australia :</i>	The Hon. Sir Henry Ayers. The Hon. J. H. Barrow.
<i>New Zealand :</i>	The Hon. Julius Vogel. The Hon. W. H. Reynolds.	<i>Tasmania :</i>	The Hon. F. M. Innes. The Hon. J. M. Wilson.
<i>Queensland :</i>	The Hon. A. H. Palmer. The Hon. J. M. Thompson.	<i>Victoria :</i>	The Hon. J. G. Francis. The Hon. E. Langton.
	<i>Western Australia :</i> The Hon. F. P. Barlee.		

The Conference having met at a quarter to 12 o'clock, the minutes of the proceedings of the 7th instant were read and confirmed.

Mr. Vogel then laid before the Conference the answers to Mr. Samuel's questions of the 7th instant, on the subject of the time occupied by Mr. Webb's line of steamers between New Zealand and San Francisco, and *vice versa*, which the Conference ordered to be printed.

*Question 1 :* The number of days occupied by Mr. Webb's steamers between California and New Zealand, in both directions, on the last six voyages?—The "Dakota" came through from San Francisco to Auckland in twenty-five days one hour, including twenty-four hours' stoppage at Honolulu. I am not able, without reference to New Zealand, to give the times of the other steamers; but if a return as to them were furnished it would be of little good, as none of them (excepting the "Dakota") ran through either from or to San Francisco, and consequently did not run in accordance with the contract. The "Nebraska," now due, will have run through from San Francisco. For the two voyages after hers, connection will have to be made at Honolulu; and subsequently, each boat will make the through voyage each way. On each of the six voyages, except that of the "Dakota," a very inferior vessel was used between Honolulu and San Francisco, and consequently those voyages were most unsatisfactorily performed.

*Question 2 :* The number of days which the steamer now expected was overdue when the "Hero" left Auckland?—According to a telegram received from New York, the "Nebraska" sailed from San Francisco on the 9th January, having waited eight days for the mails, which were delayed upon the Atlantic and during the trans-continental route. She would therefore be due in Auckland on the 3rd February; the "Hero" left Auckland on Wednesday, the 29th January, and consequently some days before the "Nebraska" was due, though two days later than the date on which she would have been due had she not waited eight days at San Francisco for the detained mails.

Mr. Barlee laid before the Conference papers on the subject of Sericulture, forwarded to him by Sir George Verdon, who requested, at the instance of Mrs. Neill, that they should be laid before the Conference. The papers were subsequently distributed among the members.

The further consideration of Mr. Palmer's resolutions on the subject of telegraphic communication with Europe by Singapore and Norman Mouth was then resumed, and, after some discussion, Mr. Palmer withdrew the same, on the ground that the three Colonies of New South Wales, New Zealand, and Queensland had come to an agreement which rendered the resolutions unnecessary.

Mr. Barlee withdrew the notice of motion given by him on the 3rd instant, on the subject of the construction of a second cable, either from Galle to Western Australia, *via* the Cocos or Keeling Islands, or from Java to Western Australia.

Mr. Palmer then moved the following notice of motion, on the subject of Intercolonial Telegraph Messages:—"That the Circular Letter of the Colonial Secretary of Queensland, annexed hereto, on the subject of Intercolonial Telegraph Messages, be taken into consideration."

(*For Circular, see p. 20.*)

When much discussion ensued; and the Conference adjourned from twenty minutes past 1 to a quarter past 2 o'clock.

On resuming, Mr. Samuel proposed, and Sir Henry Ayers seconded, the following resolution, which was unanimously agreed to, viz.:—"That on and after the 1st day of October next the charge for telegraphic messages within each of the Australasian Colonies shall be at the uniform rate of 1s. for ten words, exclusive of address and signature, and 1d. for every additional word. Press messages not to exceed half rates. These charges not to include messages upon the lines from Port Augusta to Port Darwin, Bowen to Norman Mouth, and between Tasmania and Victoria."

Mr. Vogel proposed, and Mr. Francis seconded, the following resolution, which, on being put from the Chair, was carried unanimously, viz.:—"That in accordance with the practice now partly adopted, but not laid down by regulation, messages for New Zealand be received at all the telegraph stations in the Australian Colonies, and that the proper charge be made for transmission to the port or place from which the telegrams are to be posted to New Zealand—that they be posted to the Telegraph Operator at the first station that the steamer touches at in New Zealand. Similarly, that telegrams posted in New Zealand to the Telegraph Operator at any port in Australia, shall be forwarded to their destination. The telegraph charges in Australia to be collected on delivery. That a similar practice be adopted in respect to telegrams between Western Australia and the other Australasian Colonies. That the representatives of the several Colonies agree to endeavour to give effect to this resolution."

Sir Henry Ayers then moved as follows:—"That as those descriptions of Australian wines best capable of sustaining a voyage to Great Britain contain more than 26 per cent. of proof spirit, this Conference move the Imperial Government to admit such wines at the uniform duty of 1s. per gallon; or, should a limit of the strength be considered necessary, then that all Australian wines containing less than 35 per cent. of proof spirit be admitted at a duty of 1s. per gallon."

Which, after some discussion, he proposed to amend as follows,—and the same having been seconded by Mr. Samuel, was carried unanimously:—"That as those descriptions of Australian wines best capable of sustaining a voyage to the United Kingdom contain more than 26 per cent. of proof