

Negotiations.

tion from Mr. E. C. Cracknell, enclosing an offer from an eminent firm of contractors for the construction of a second cable between Europe and Australia, and that, after full consideration by the Executive Council of Sydney, the proposal has been submitted to the various Governments of the Australian Colonies."

I have most respectfully to refer to my several offers already made for this purpose, and to inform you that I left England for the express purpose of laying before the Australian Governments an offer to connect Australia with England by a complete duplicate line, and that I have full powers to enter into and sign a binding contract with any and every Australian Government for this purpose, either on the principle of a guarantee of interest, or a subsidy upon the amount of capital necessary to carry it out. Also, should the Governments prefer to order the cable direct from the contractors, to be paid for by money raised by themselves, and so make the duplicate cable their own property, and so arrange their own tariff, &c., I am also prepared to enter into an agreement on behalf of the Messrs. Siemens Brothers, of London, to manufacture and lay the cable; and also, in order to guard the Governments against the inconvenience and trouble attending the working and maintenance of a cable, to work and maintain the cable for them on reasonable terms.

I shall be glad if the Executive will consider these proposals at an early date, and, if required, I shall be happy to supply any further information in my power. Permit me also to add that I only await a telegram to attend upon your Government.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

AUDLEY COOTE.

No. 9.

The Hon. the PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Government Offices, Wellington, 17th November, 1876.

You are aware that it has been suggested that a Conference of representatives of the Australasian Governments should consider various questions relating to telegraph cable arrangements, and especially the steps that should be taken, and the co-operation that should be sought, with a view to securing a second line of communication between Australia and India. You are also aware that the Eastern Extension Australasia and China Telegraph Company (Limited) recently submitted to the Colonial Office a proposal to duplicate a specified portion of the Company's Indian system; and that that proposal has, through His Excellency the Governor, been referred to this Government for consideration.

2. The Government do not think it desirable that they should actively promote a Conference; but they would appoint a representative or representatives should one be resolved upon with any prospect of a practical result. As to the proposal of the Eastern Extension Company, His Excellency has, in compliance with a resolution adopted in Cabinet, informed the Secretary of State for the Colonies that the Government "are of opinion that at present this colony would not be justified in incurring the liability involved in agreeing to the proposal."

3. I enclose copies of despatches and memoranda relative to duplication, and also of the papers on the subject generally, which were presented to Parliament during the late session. The telegram referred to in the earlier of Lord Carnarvon's despatches was not received by His Excellency.

4. The disadvantages of an interruption of telegraphic communication between England and the Australasian Colonies have recently been felt to be very great, commercially and socially. It is recognized that, until there is a second line between the colonies and India, the probability of such interruptions must be constant and must increase. The Companies interested in the various lines will naturally desire, provided the cost be not excessive, to avoid stoppages of communication and the direct and consequent loss of revenue; and the opinion prevails that the Home Government, as well as that of India, should contribute towards any well-devised plan for securing the cheapest possible, and the most permanent, telegraph system.

5. The Government desire that they may be kept fully informed upon the subject. I have, therefore, to request that you will, through the Colonial Office, endeavour to ascertain whether the Imperial authorities are willing to contribute towards the cost, by way of subsidy or otherwise, of such duplicate line or lines as may be considered most desirable; and that you will make such inquiries in other directions as will be likely to aid you in that endeavour. You will, of course, carefully guard against its being supposed that the Government are committed to any arrangement until their approval of it has been asked for and obtained; and you will, if necessary, make it understood that without the consent of Parliament no negotiations will be binding upon the colony.

The Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

I have, &c.,

H. A. ATKINSON.

No. 10.

Mr. AUDLEY COOTE to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, New Zealand.

Re Duplicate Cable to London.

SIR,—

Hobart Town, 8th November, 1876.

I again take the liberty of addressing you on this important subject, as my attention has just been called to a letter and telegram published in the newspapers, and sent by Mr. E. C. Cracknell to the Government of New South Wales, in which he recommends that the cable from Singapore to Banjoewangie be arranged for at once, and that the Eastern Extension Company offer to lay this cable for a subsidy of £21,780 per annum.