

The maintenance of the lighthouses in Bass' and Banks' Straits, by Tasmania, almost unassisted, is a familiar instance of such action by a single colony. But the equitable sense of her neighbors has recognised their liability to contribution for the maintenance of what are now, by common consent, regarded as ocean lights.

The cables between the continent of Australia and the colonies of New Zealand and Tasmania seem to fall within the principle which governs the precedent just quoted. They originated in the necessity of individual members, they now constitute the common advantage of the collective group. The conclusion is obvious. They should be included in the same category with the cables, or lines of telegraph, by which it is now proposed to connect Australia with Europe. The duplication of those lines is admittedly a matter of common interest to the Australias; but, since it can only be effected by a subsidy, the larger and wealthier colonies invite their neighbors to share the cost. Hitherto telegraphic communication has cost these colonies nothing beyond the price charged for the transmission of messages; and, when a common subsidy was demanded, it seemed only reasonable that the claim of New Zealand and Tasmania to be relieved, to some extent at all events, of the burden of their subsidies to intercolonial cables should be urged by their representatives, and admitted by those of the other colonies. This natural and equitable view of the question the Conference has declined to entertain, as foreign to the primary object of its assembly.

Sir James Wilson submits that the claim to consideration thus advanced on behalf of Tasmania and New Zealand fell fairly and legitimately within the scope of the power of the Conference. He is also of opinion that a frank recognition of the principle enunciated in his resolutions would have approved itself to the public sense of the Australian colonies, and would have found ready acceptance with the Australian Legislatures.

Impressed with these considerations, Sir James Wilson feels bound, on the part of the colony which he has the honor to represent, to place on the minutes a record of his dissent from the conclusion arrived at by the Conference on this question, and of his regret that its decision will, in all probability, preclude the co-operation of Tasmania in the proposed duplication of the telegraph from Port Darwin to Singapore.

J. M. WILSON.

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