

first year's operation under the reduced rate of 4s., the actual loss of revenue to the cable company was £55,040, of which the colonies of Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania paid one-half in proportion to their population; our proportion of the loss being £27,520. If I bring the second year up to the end of 30th April next—the estimated revenue of March and April being £33,000—the revenue up to the end of April would be £190,723, or more than £8,000 greater than the first year. The first year it was £182,696; the second, the estimated revenue will be £190,723, showing a loss of £47,014, of which one-half, or £23,507, will have to be made good by the colonies. Of course the increased rate only came into operation on the 1st January, and therefore we have only four months of the year—January, February, March, and April—during which the traffic was carried on under the increased rate. Making a very rough estimate indeed of the revenue for the year ending 30th April, 1894, and allowing for little or no increase of business—although I am sure we all expect and hope that the depression existing in the whole of the Australian colonies will soon be removed, and that there will be a rapid extension of business—but I say, allowing for no increase whatever in business, the amount to make good will be about £17,500, and having now the assistance of New Zealand, that small amount will be spread over all the colonies with the exception of Queensland. I have much pleasure in seconding the motion.

The Hon. A. WYNNE (V.): On behalf of Tasmania I am desired to state that that colony is favourable to the continuation of this guarantee. They are not inclined to give notice to terminate it, but consider the question somewhat on the lines mentioned by the Hon. Mr. Kidd; the feeling being that, if business continues to increase, the colonies will not be called upon to pay anything, or the amount will be merely nominal.

The Hon. J. G. WARD (N.Z.): As you will probably follow me, Mr. President, and it being quite likely that you will be in accord with the other colonies, I will put on record how this question has affected New Zealand. In March, 1891, we had a short meeting in Sydney, and New Zealand and Queensland then happened to be in the one boat; we were on the one side. The attitude of New Zealand was not favourable to the arrangement which was then proposed. At that time there was good reason to warrant the stand New Zealand took with Queensland; but the position has been altered by the very large reduction which has been made in the cost of cable messages between the Australian colonies and New Zealand. That has warranted New Zealand in joining in the guarantee for the international and intercolonial cable. What I wish to indicate now is how this question has affected New Zealand revenue. I am bound to say the arrangement has so far been satisfactory. The decrease in the cost of cable messages between New Zealand and Australia has been the very large one of 340 per cent. The actual decrease in the cost of messages has been from 8s. 6d. per ten words to 2s. 6d. per ten words; and when I say that, since the reduction has taken place, the increase in intercolonial messages between New Zealand and Australia has been 84·71 per cent., and the decrease in revenue only 25·31 per cent., I think it will be seen that as far as we are concerned the result must be considered very satisfactory. Then, again, New Zealand has benefited by joining with the other colonies in the guarantee for the international cable by having the rate reduced from 10s. 8d. to 5s. 2d., a reduction of 115 per cent. The result of the working has shown that, although we reduced the rate 115 per cent., we have had an increase of 101·55 in messages, and their value has increased 70·49 per cent. between 1st January and 15th March, over the corresponding period of last year. New Zealand at the present time believes in the guarantee as a good arrangement for the colonies, the commercial world is well pleased with it, and all other interests are satisfied with it. The company have shown a distinct desire to meet the reasonable requirements of the colonies, and I am quite prepared to assist, as far as possible, in this matter. There is a fear that the Eastern Extension Company may become a huge monopoly. Personally, I do not care if they do, so long as they give us reasonable rates and conduct their business as satisfactorily as they have done in the past. I have very much pleasure in supporting the motion of my hon. friend, and I can only hope that the present depression will not continue, and that, with returning prosperity, the guarantee as the outcome of increased business will be proportionately diminished.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of Queensland, of course, I enter our usual dissent in regard to this matter.

Question put and passed.

5. REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE OF ELECTRIC LIGHT AND TRAMWAYS.

Mr. C. TODD (S.A.), in moving—

“That the Report from the Committee of Electric Light and Tramways be adopted”—
said: It will be remembered that at the Hobart Conference held in 1892, the Minister for Agriculture and Education (South Australia), the Hon. W. Copley, moved, and Mr. Kidd seconded the following motion—

“That the drafting of a code of Rules and Regulations for erection of electric light and power wires be referred to a committee of experts, consisting of Messrs. E. C. Cracknell, George Smibert, A. F. Matveieff, R. Henry, and C. Todd, representing the Telegraph Departments of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania, and South Australia; and Messrs. Haes, Arnot, and Callender, representing the Electric Light Companies. Mr. Todd to be convener of the Committee, and the report to be forwarded to the various Postmasters-General.”

Mr. Cracknell, as you all know, died a few weeks ago, and Mr. Walker took his place. Mr. Walker also represented the colony of Queensland on the Committee, Mr. Matveieff having retired. Anyone at all acquainted with what has been done in these colonies, and elsewhere, in connection with electric light and power wires, must feel that the time has come when the whole of these works should be constructed under properly devised rules and regulations. It is necessary for the protection of the Post and Telegraph Departments; it is necessary for the public safety; and it is necessary also to secure efficiency. The city authorities of Melbourne and Adelaide are contemplating the