

The PRESIDENT: With all due respect to the opinion of Mr. Todd, who is an expert, whose opinion will be highly valued, I think we should be going far enough if we merely received the report, and embodied it in our proceedings. We all know that we are only on the threshold of the science of electricity, and we do not know but that in the course of a few months some fresh discoveries may be made, which may entirely alter the present valuable suggestions that have been made here. So far as our present knowledge goes, the experience of the experts will no doubt be very fully drawn upon from this report in any colony in which legislation is undertaken. My opinion is that whatever we decide upon in this Conference should be carried out if possible. I do not think we should come to any resolution or bind ourselves to do anything, and then hang fire for two or three years afterwards. Wherever it is possible to carry out any agreement that has been agreed to, it should be done, and as expeditiously as possible; therefore, I think we would be going far enough by simply receiving the report, and any colony will then be in a position to avail itself of it in any legislation upon the subject. It does not follow that it will be legislated upon in all the colonies. There is a great demand in this colony for such an Act, and it is our intention to grapple with the matter, because we are beginning to see the danger arising to the telegraph system, and these suggestions will prove of great value. I hope Mr. Todd will raise no further objection, and agree to merely receiving the report. We acknowledge the great services rendered by the Committee of experts, and if occasion should arise there will be no hesitation in calling them together again.

The HON. J. G. WARD (N.Z.): I have much pleasure in conforming to the desire of the President, and will consent to the motion being withdrawn.

The PRESIDENT: The motion now will read—

“That the report of the Committee containing rules and regulations to be observed in the erection or laying of electric light and power wires be received with the thanks of the Conference to the members of the Committee for their valuable services.”

Question put and passed.

#### SECOND CABLE ROUTE.

In accordance with notice of motion, the HON. J. G. WARD (N.Z.), moved—

“That in the opinion of this Conference the time has arrived when a second cable route should be established *viâ* the Pacific to Vancouver, touching at such places *en route* as may be hereafter agreed upon.”

This motion, as you will observe, is one which, if passed, will not commit any of us to any expenditure. I think this Conference should put on record their opinion that it is desirable to have a Pacific cable *viâ* Vancouver to Canada and Europe. It will be for those who deem it desirable to enter upon such an enterprise to submit a proposal—a joint one, I presume, to the several colonies; and the whole scheme can then be carefully considered by the various Governments. My own opinion is that those who are now responsible for the existing cable communication between the Australian colonies and Europe should realise the vast importance to the colonies, as well as to Europe, of having a second cable *viâ* Vancouver, through British territory and under the management of British subjects. We have had proposals submitted, and even surveys made to some extent, in connection with a projected Pacific cable, but so far nothing definite has been accomplished. We are here to express our individual opinions on the subject, and my own idea of a Pacific cable is that one from these colonies should start from Queensland and cross over to New Zealand to a place called Ahipara Bay, then overland to Mongomni, thence to Fiji, and on to Honolulu, thence to the Sandwich Islands, thence to Fanning Island, which belongs to the British Government; from there to Vancouver, thence to the Red River, on the Canadian continent, and thence to the terminus of the cables lying between Newfoundland and Great Britain. Once it is across the Canadian continent it will, of course, be practicable for those who enter into the project to use the Mackay-Bennett cable, and thus duplicate the cable to England. Canada would then be in direct communication with these colonies. According to a proposal formulated a few years ago, the rate for the transmission of messages right from the colonies to England would be 4s. a word, and in return it was stipulated that we should give a guarantee of 4 per cent. on the estimated cost of the cable, which would be about 7,000 miles in length, and cost about £1,500,000, so that roughly speaking the guarantee required would amount to under £70,000 per annum. The scheme would be a gigantic one, and those undertaking it would require very favourable terms; but it would be a great advantage to the colonies, both politically and commercially. It is well known that in time of war a treaty could be entered into for the protection of existing cables.

The PRESIDENT: That has already been done.

The HON. J. G. WARD: And it would, doubtless, be done in connection with any future cables. But there are special advantages in taking the cable entirely through British territory.

The PRESIDENT: It cannot be done.

The HON. J. G. WARD: Practically I think it could, and there is a great deal to be said in favour of such a route as compared with any other that might be adopted. I should like to add, that if the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company wish to maintain the business which they have begun between these colonies and England, Sir John Pender will do well to seriously consider the desirability of laying a Pacific cable *viâ* Vancouver. I have no fear of any evil consequences resulting from a monopoly, because I am confident that should there be any abuse of that monopoly the colonies would unite to ensure that what is done is conducive to their general interests. I hope the resolution will be agreed to. I will not take up any further time now, but will content myself with formally moving the resolution.

The HON. J. KIDD (V.): I second the motion as it stands on the business-paper.

The PRESIDENT: As no one else seems willing to handle this subject, I shall make a few remarks upon it. I am very pleased indeed to see that the opinion which Queensland has entertained for the last eighteen years or more with reference to a Pacific cable is being made the subject of serious discussion.