

companies; if not, the Imperial authorities might strongly advise the acceptance of a tender by one company, and that would not serve us as well as two. I would therefore move that the paragraph be amended to read in this way:—

“That the London Post Office be invited to call for tenders for a weekly service on conditions approved by the colonies, from *bonâ fide* English companies (to be performed by two companies running on alternate weeks, as at present), but before accepting any tender that all tenders be submitted to the colonies.”

The Hon. A. WYNNE (V.): I regret that I can neither accept nor support this amendment. At present we are confined to two companies. There are really only two companies trading to these colonies that carry mails; and if this motion were carried, it would mean that we would have to pay whatever these two companies insisted upon charging us. I favour the recommendation as originally drafted, so that we may have competition. If one company will carry mails for one-half or two-thirds of what two companies will, why should we throw away one-third of our own money to assist one of the other companies? We shall have no competition if we are restricted to two companies. The great thing is to have competition. We want to have mails carried in the most expeditious way by the cheapest route. We have not the interests of any one or two or more companies at heart; in fact, I would not limit it to one or two companies. Four companies might join in a tender, and let us get tenders at the lowest rates. Then why should we be restricted to English companies? We have some large Australian companies here, which year after year are building larger steamers, and I do not see why they should be prevented from tendering. I do not take “English” to cover “Australian” companies, although that may have been the intention of those who made this recommendation. We have large companies here managed by men of great energy, who are pushing their business day after day. Year after year they put on larger and better appointed boats, and they can carry mails at a greater speed now than the P. and O. or Orient steamers did a few years ago. There are numbers of those boats that run from sixteen to eighteen knots an hour, which is a much greater speed than is required under the present contracts. Therefore, I suggest that the words “or Australasian” be inserted after the word “English.” We will then foster our own industry and be better served.

The Hon. J. G. WARD (N.Z.): The word “British” will cover “Australasian” as well as “English.”

Mr. C. TODD (S.A.): I think there is a good deal of force in what Mr. Wynne has said, and I second his amendment. But, with the exception of that alteration, I think the paragraph might stand as printed. The committee intended that the word “English” should mean “British,” so as to exclude the vessels of foreign countries. We shall have plenty of competition, because, as Mr. Wynne said, some of the Australasian companies have now steamers equal to the P. and O. steamers, except perhaps some of the newest vessels built by the latter, and they will compete with the boats now carrying mails.

The Hon. J. G. WARD (N. Z.): I would further suggest that in addition to inviting these tenders at the London Post Office, they should be simultaneously called for in the Australian papers. By doing that, some fire would be put into the business, so far as steamship owners are concerned. They would feel we were in earnest, and the English companies would be kept up to the mark. It would not hurt the resolution in any way, and it may do good.

The PRESIDENT: I will read the paragraph embracing all the suggestions which have been made—

“That the London Post Office be invited to call for tenders in Great Britain and Australasia for a weekly service on conditions approved by the colonies, from *bonâ fide* British companies (to be performed by one or more companies running on alternate weeks as at present). Before accepting any such tender that all tenders be submitted to the colonies.”

Question, as amended, put and passed.

*Term of Contract.*

Recommendation—“Term of contract, seven years”—put and passed.

*Time of Arrival.*

On the next recommendation—

“That it be a stipulation that greater regularity in the time of arrival of mails be insisted upon, as under the present arrangement of alternately slow and fast vessels the equal weekly interval is destroyed”—

Mr. C. TODD (S.A.) said: The vessels do not run alternately, as a matter of fact. We have some comparatively slow boats, which were considered fast a few years ago; and it is a great inconvenience to the commercial public that the mails should arrive at unequal intervals. Merchants and bankers whom I have spoken to have told me that it is not so much a very fast service as a regular service that they require, so that they will know on what morning they will find their mails on their desks.

The PRESIDENT: Leave out the word “alternately.”

Amendment agreed to; and question, as amended, put and passed.

*Time to be Occupied.*

On the recommendation—

“Time to be occupied between Brindisi or Naples and Adelaide be reduced to thirty days. The accompanying Return (Appendix C) shows the times occupied by the steamers of the two companies from Brindisi and Naples to Adelaide during the year 1892, the average time taken having been from Brindisi 28 days 17 hrs. 20 min., and from Naples 28 days 22 hrs. 26 min.”—

The Hon. A. WYNNE (V.) said: I suggest that we call for alternative tenders as to time, say, from twenty-five to thirty days. I feel that in the colonies we must keep up with the march of progress,  
and