

Other important resolutions were adopted by the Conference. Among those affecting New Zealand are the following :—

Canadian Mail-service.

“That this Conference reaffirms the desirableness of establishing a four-weekly service (alternating with the San Francisco service) between Australia, New Zealand, and Vancouver, the mail-steamers calling at one main port in New Zealand and such ports in Australia as may be determined upon.”

Pacific Cable.

Considerable discussion took place on this question. The Postmaster-General of Queensland introduced the subject, and submitted the following motion :—

“That in the opinion of this Conference it is desirable that—

“(a.) The construction, working, and maintenance of a submarine cable through British territory, or under British control, from Vancouver Island to Australasia be undertaken by the Governments of Great Britain, the Dominion of Canada, and the Australasian Colonies as a joint national and public work.

“(b.) The cost of its construction, working, and maintenance to be borne in the following proportions—viz., Great Britain one-third, the Dominion of Canada one-third, and the Australasian Colonies one-third.

This was seconded *pro formâ* by the Postmaster-General of this colony, who, however, advised the withdrawal of the motion. The Postmaster-General of New South Wales then moved the following amendment, which became the substantive motion, the Postmaster-General, Queensland, withdrawing his on finding that it was not favoured by the other representatives :—

“This Conference reaffirms the desirableness of the construction of a Pacific cable to connect the Australasian Colonies and Canada, and, in view of the ascertained practicability of the scheme, respectfully urges upon the various Colonial Governments that steps be taken for the furtherance of the project at the earliest opportunity”

The printed papers which have been laid before Parliament disclose the position of the Pacific-cable question up to the present time. Unfortunately they do not show that much progress of a practical character has been made.

The question of penny postage between the Mother-country [and the colonies was disposed of by the following resolution :—

“That, while sympathizing with the desire expressed by Mr Henniker Heaton for a cheaper postage rate to and from England and the colonies, this Conference regards the present time inopportune for carrying out the proposal, and hereby decides accordingly”

The telegraph code vocabulary lately issued by the Berne Telegraph Bureau was considered. Strong representations against its acceptance in its present form are to be made by the Colonies at the Telegraph Convention which is to meet at Buda Pesth next year.

Many other matters of a departmental nature affecting the Post and Telegraph services of the colonies were dealt with. These will be found fully set out in the printed report of the Conference proceedings already laid before Parliament.

A reciprocal agreement has been entered into between the Railway and this department, under which payment for mails conveyed by ordinary trains is to be made and on the other hand the Railway Department is to pay for postage and telegrams, and for other services performed for it by this department. For mail-conveyance a payment of £15 a mile over main lines is to be made, *plus* 3d. per mile for haulage of the post-office sorting-carriages, and £10 a mile on branch lines, which, on present mileage, amounts to £29,328 10s. per annum. Special trains will be paid for at the rate of 5s. per mile, as formerly, and for the carriage of parcel mails the payment of $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per pound continued. The Railway Department is to provide and maintain the post-office sorting-carriages, and the Postal officers in charge of the mails are to travel free.

For the current year the Railway pays £3,832 10s. 2d. for postage, and £11,870 14s. 3d. for telegrams also the ordinary subscription for Telephone Exchange connections (in lieu of the capital cost of the connections), the cost of maintenance of railway telegraph-wires, &c.—the total amount receivable by this office being estimated at £17,723 14s. 4d., leaving a net balance of £11,604 15s. 8d. in favour of the Railway. The payment to the Railway Department for performing the Postal and Telegraph business at combined railway post and telegraph-offices has been adjusted and increased by about £2,000 a year on the sum voted on the 1894–95 estimates. Free passes for Post and Telegraph officers have been abolished, all railway passes now being paid for at special schedule rates. The additional net payment to the Railway Department for the current year therefore amounts to about £13,900, provision for which has been made on this year's estimates. There are other services which will be treated as matters of account, and adjusted accordingly.

This arrangement with the Railway revives the question of this department being paid for work performed gratuitously for the public service generally, the value of which last year amounted to about £90,000. Were payment made, economy would follow, especially in connection with the public business transacted by telegraph.

The payment for the haulage of the railway mail-carriages with mails by the Wellington and Manawatu Railway Company has been increased from 3d. to 6d. per train-mile.

New £1 and £5 postal-notes have been brought into circulation. They are different in form to the ordinary postal-note, being somewhat like commercial bank-notes. The currency is unlimited in time, as provided by “The Post-Office Acts Amendment Act, 1893,” and the notes are payable on demand.