

POSTAL AND TELEGRAPHIC CONFERENCE, 1896.

Report of the Delegates to the Intercolonial Conference,

HELD IN SYDNEY, IN JANUARY, 1896.

President :—The Honorable JOSEPH COOK, M.P., of New South Wales.

Each of the seven Colonies of Australasia was represented.

The Conference sat on the 17th, 18th, and 20th January, 1896.

The following resolutions were adopted, viz. :—

RELATING TO THE PROPOSED PACIFIC CABLE.

1. That, in the opinion of this Conference, the Pacific cable should be constructed and owned jointly by the various Governments interested.
2. That, in the opinion of this Conference, the landing places of such cable should be only upon territory belonging to or under the control of the British Empire.
3. That, in the opinion of this Conference, the cost of its construction, working, and maintenance be borne in the following proportions, namely :—Great Britain, one-third; the Dominion of Canada, one-third; and the contributing Australasian Colonies, one-third.
4. That, in the opinion of this Conference, the route from Fiji to Australia be *via* Norfolk Island, thence bifurcating to the nearest convenient landing places in the north of New Zealand and Moreton Bay respectively.
5. That, in the opinion of this Conference, it is highly desirable that South Australia join the other Colonies in the Pacific cable project, and having regard to their vested interests in the transcontinental line, Dr. Cockburn be invited to make a proposition, embodying the terms on which the South Australian Government would be prepared to join the other Colonies in the said project.

The Hon. Dr. Cockburn intimated the following as the proposal of the South Australian Government, viz. :—South Australia is willing to join in the project provided that a guarantee, either from the contributing Colonies alone, or jointly with the Imperial Government, be given, that the financial position of South Australia, as regards the Port Darwin line be maintained on the basis of the average of the last five years.

The Hon. Mr. Reeves stated that he had received a cable from the Hon. Mr. Ward with regard to the terms on which New Zealand would come in as a contributing Colony to the effect that of course it would be very disadvantageous to New Zealand to come in on an equally responsible footing with the other three Colonies; at the same time, Mr. Ward would be prepared to give way and do so, annexing, however, the stipulation that Victoria and New South Wales should join with New Zealand in facing any possible loss on the present cable,