

pany's Cape cable scheme. At one time there was a probability of New South Wales and Victoria following the lead of Tasmania and Western and South Australia. This, however, has been dissipated—at least, the Governments of Victoria and New South Wales have now fallen into line with Canada, Queensland, and New Zealand in pressing the early completion of the Pacific cable. The latest information is to the effect that tenders have been called by the Board appointed by the Pacific Cable Committee for the manufacture and laying of the cable. Papers which will be laid before Parliament give in detail the history of the question for the past year.

INTERCOLONIAL CABLE TARIFF.

The original agreement with the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company, which was entered into in December, 1892, guaranteed the company a revenue of £26,258 per annum from 1st January, 1893, over the New Zealand–Sydney cable, in return for the reduction of the cable-rates from 8s. 6d. for the first ten words, and 10d. for every additional word in excess of ten, to 2s. and 3d. respectively, the company bearing one-fourth of any loss.

On 1st May, 1895, an amended agreement came into operation, under which the guarantee was reduced to £20,000 per annum, and the company ceased to share in the loss. This expired on the 30th April last. The company, in proposing a renewal, claimed that the guarantee should be increased from £20,000 to £26,000 per annum. On this being absolutely declined by the colony, the company determined on a word-rate of 3d., instead of the minimum charge of 2s. for the first ten words, and 3d. each additional word. This was accepted, although much in favour of the company, the deficiency for 1899–1900 under the guarantee agreement being only £1,197. At the same time the company was asked whether it was prepared to sell to the department the cables between here and Australia, in reply to which the Manager in Australasia intimated that he would communicate with his Board. No reply having been received, the Agent-General was requested to ascertain the cost of manufacturing and laying a new cable between New Zealand and Australia, and satisfactory information has been received on the subject. But, pending the laying of the Pacific cable, which would render a Government-owned cable unnecessary, the question will remain in abeyance.

The colonies have agreed to an inland rate of 1d. per word on cable messages to and from New Zealand.

The increased cost to the users of the cable under the new tariff may be seen from the following table in respect to a message of twenty words:—

For	Old Rate.	New Rate.	Increase.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
New South Wales	7 2	8 4	1 2
Queensland	9 6	10 0	0 6
South Australia	9 6	10 0	0 6
Tasmania	11 4	13 4	2 0
Victoria	8 6	10 0	1 6
Western Australia	11 4	11 8	0 4

The following are the total charges for cablegrams under the new tariff:—

Between New Zealand and New South Wales	...	...	5d. per word.
" New Zealand and Victoria	...	...	6d. "
" New Zealand and Queensland	...	...	6d. "
" New Zealand and South Australia	...	...	6d. "
" New Zealand and Western Australia	...	...	7d. "
" New Zealand and Tasmania	...	...	8d. "

The charges for Press messages are not affected.

The following tables give the amounts paid by the colonies to the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company, the receipts from the cable traffic under the 1892 and 1895 agreements, and the proportion of loss borne by the company under the guarantee agreement of 1892:—

UNDER THE 1892 AGREEMENT.

Contributing Colonies.	January–April, 1893 (Four Months).	1893–94.	1894–95.	Totals.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
New Zealand	1,498 0 6	4,958 8 5	4,989 15 8	11,446 4 7
Victoria	734 16 9	2,432 5 11	2,447 13 7	5,614 16 3
New South Wales	729 11 6	2,414 17 4	2,430 2 10	5,574 11 8
South Australia	206 9 6	683 8 6	687 15 0	1,577 13 0
Tasmania	94 10 2	312 16 4	314 15 11	722 2 5
Western Australia	32 1 7	106 3 6	106 17 0	245 2 1
Cable Company's proportion	1,098 10 0	3,636 0 0	3,659 0 0	8,393 10 0
Total contributions	4,394 0 0	14,544 0 0	14,636 0 0	33,574 0 0
Cable Company's receipts on actual business	4,359 0 0	11,714 0 0	11,622 0 0	27,695 0 0
Amount guaranteed	£8,753 0 0	£26,258 0 0	£26,258 0 0	£61,269 0 0