

## No. 12.

The Hon. Mr. DEAKIN to the Right Hon. the PREMIER.

Commonwealth of Australia, Department of External Affairs,  
Melbourne, 14th October, 1903.

SIR,—

I have the honour to forward herewith copies of telegrams which have recently passed between us on the subject of the proposed Conference respecting the Pacific cable, to confirm those which I have sent, and to acknowledge the receipt of your replies.

When the matter comes to be considered by the Conference, I have no doubt all the recent correspondence which has passed between us, as between all the partners in the enterprise, will be submitted and made public.

Details require to be settled as to the time, place, and character of representation at the Conference. In my opinion it should be held as soon as possible, and this Government will do all in its power to facilitate an early meeting.

On the 2nd instant I communicated with England for the purpose of ascertaining the views of the Colonial Office on the points I have mentioned, but am so far without any definite reply.

Although as a place of meeting Australia would be most convenient for us, I do not consider that point as of very great importance, but think it should be settled in the first instance, as it is obvious that upon the decision arrived at will depend, to some extent, at any rate, the character of the representative whom we shall select.

I shall be glad to learn whether you consider that the Conference should be composed of Ministers or officials, or, if it is to be held in London, of the usual representatives of the partners there resident. If the latter course is decided upon the Conference will practically amount to a mere meeting of the members of the Pacific Cable Board.

Further, I think that the subjects on which the representatives are to confer should be definitely stated beforehand, and that the delegates should not be authorised to introduce fresh matters. I should be pleased to have your views as to what these subjects should be.

It is, of course, understood that the Conference is to be merely consultative, without any authority to bind any of the Governments concerned.

I shall be glad to have your co-operation in arriving at an early decision on the matters referred to in this letter, as I have no doubt our partners in the enterprise will readily agree to any proposal which we may jointly make.

I have, &c.,

ALFRED DEAKIN.

The Right Hon. the Premier of New Zealand, Wellington.

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Enclosures.

Telegram from PRIME MINISTER OF THE COMMONWEALTH to the PREMIER OF NEW ZEALAND, dated the 2nd October, 1903.

DISPOSED to agree to request for Pacific Cable Conference on matters set out by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, but suggest that if we are to meet our partners in friendly discussion it would remove possible misapprehension and some soreness if you could see some way to first withdraw imputation on the Commonwealth contained in 8th and 9th paragraphs of your despatch of 11th May.

Telegram from the PREMIER OF NEW ZEALAND to the PRIME MINISTER OF THE COMMONWEALTH, dated the 4th October, 1903.

VERY pleased to hear you are disposed to accede to request to hold Pacific Cable Conference. With you I earnestly desire that the partners should meet and in friendly spirit discuss matters. When writing despatch of 11th May I felt very keenly interest other partners would be prejudiced by contemplated action of Commonwealth. From the reply of your predecessor I was not aware any soreness created by paragraphs 8 and 9 my letter 11th May, and regret any misapprehension possible, and, whilst at present adhering to the opinion expressed that result of proposed agreement entered into would be as stated, I, to facilitate partners meeting in friendly spirit, and accepting your overtures in spirit intended, frankly state no wrongful imputation on Commonwealth was intended, and desire paragraphs to which exception has been taken may be so construed.

Telegram from the PRIME MINISTER OF THE COMMONWEALTH to PREMIER OF NEW ZEALAND, dated the 5th October, 1903.

THANKS for your prompt and considerate reply. Where and when do you consider Conference should meet?

Telegram from the PREMIER OF NEW ZEALAND to the PRIME MINISTER OF THE COMMONWEALTH, dated the 13th October, 1903.

ANTICIPATE Colonial Office would wish Conference held London, but if not London it is only natural to suggest New Zealand.