

It was proposed,—“That in order to obtain a reduction in the charge for telegrams between Great Britain, India, and Australasia, the Imperial Government be requested to join with the Colonies in a temporary subsidy not exceeding £25,000 per annum, for the purpose of securing that object, and that the Governments of South Australia and Victoria be requested to take the necessary steps to give effect to the above recommendation ;” on which question the numbers for and against were equal.

A resolution was also proposed in reference to the above motion,—“That in addition, a free press message of fifty words per diem from London to Australia be furnished ;” which was negatived.

VI.—INTERCOLONIAL COMMERCIAL RECIPROCITY.

The Conference, after duly considering Lord Kimberley's Despatch of 19th April, 1872, and the other correspondence on this subject, resolved to again urge upon the attention of his Lordship the claims of the Australasian Colonies, and adopted a memorial in favour of the removal of the restrictions which prevent two or more Colonies entering into arrangements for the admission, within their respective territories, of articles the growth, produce, or manufacture of any part of Australasia, upon terms of which they may mutually agree.

VII.—INTERCOLONIAL CUSTOMS UNION.

The question of adopting a uniform Tariff throughout the Australasian Colonies was discussed by the Conference, and a resolution was passed affirming the desirableness of such a course, on the understanding that the “Union” should be established on the principle that Customs duties ought to be levied for purposes of revenue only, and not for the purposes of protection. On this question there was much diversity of opinion, and the motion was carried by a majority of one.

VIII.—THE MURRAY RIVER DUTIES.

The Conference passed a resolution affirming the desirableness of abolishing the present system of collecting Customs Duties on the Murray, and substituting the payment of lump sums, to be arranged on an equitable basis by the Colonies more immediately concerned.

IX.—COAST LIGHTS.

The subject of Coast Lights having been brought under the attention of the Conference, a Committee was appointed to consider whether it would be desirable to establish a General Board for the Australasian Colonies, similar to the Trinity Board of London. The Committee reported that the time had not yet arrived when an independent Board, possessing executive functions, could be advantageously appointed in these Colonies; but it was recommended that the principal marine officers of the several Colonies should meet in conference to consider the whole question of the coast lights, and to report as to their efficiency and economical management; also, whether new lights were required, and in what proportion the several Colonies should contribute to the general lighting-up of the coast. The report of the Committee was adopted by the Conference, and several independent motions on the subject of lighthouses, and the liability of the different Governments for their payment, were then withdrawn, in order that they might be referred to the proposed Nautical Committee. The Conference further passed a resolution to the effect that the risk to life and property occasioned by the existence of dangerous groups of islands, known as “The Snares,” and the Auckland Islands, southward of New Zealand, rendered the erection and maintenance of a lighthouse in that vicinity eminently desirable; and that it be a recommendation to the Imperial Government, and to the several Colonial Governments, to contribute to the expense of such light in proportion to the tonnage of the shipping, inwards or outwards, in Great Britain, and in each colony, deriving benefit from the same.

X.—AUSTRALIAN WINES.

In consequence of the treaty with France, which limits the alcoholic strength of wines admitted into the United Kingdom at 1s. per gallon duty to 26 degrees of proof spirit, virtually precluding the exportation of the most suitable class of Australian wines, the Conference appointed a Committee to prepare a memorial to the Home Government on the subject. The Committee brought up a report, praying that the strength of wines to be admitted at the shilling duty might be increased to 35 degrees; and the memorial, having been discussed and considered, was adopted by the Conference.

XI.—REMEDIES AGAINST ABSCONDING DEBTORS AND CRIMINALS.

These subjects having occupied the attention of the Conference, it was resolved that the Government of South Australia be requested to undertake the preparation of a measure to remedy the defects in the law regarding absconding debtors, and that the Government of Queensland be requested to prepare a Bill on the subject of the extradition of criminals. The Conference undertook to use their best endeavours to get such Bills passed into law, subject to their being approved by the Law Officers of the several Colonies.

XII.—TRUST FUNDS.

The Conference adopted a memorial to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, praying that Her Majesty's Government would take the necessary steps to enable trustees in the United Kingdom to invest trust funds in Colonial Government Securities.

XIII.—REFUGE FOR DISTRESSED SEAMEN AT SOMERSET.

It was decided by the Conference that the various Colonies should contribute to the maintenance of Somerset in proportion to their tonnage passing through Torres Straits, and that an application be made to the Imperial Government to continue their present subscription to the said settlement, Queensland undertaking to defray one-third of the total cost.