

1876.

NEW ZEALAND.

TELEGRAPH CABLE NEGOTIATIONS,

(PAPERS RELATING TO).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

The Hon. Sir J. VOGEL to the Hon. D. POLLEN.

General Government Offices, Wellington,

March, 1876.

SIR,—

I have the honor to forward to you some papers and correspondence connected with my recent Telegraph Cable negotiations. So much has been recorded upon the subject, that it will be interesting to complete the record.

2. As, however, the papers now forwarded do not fully indicate the course of the negotiations, which were largely carried on at personal interviews, it will be well for me to give a brief general explanation on the subject.

3. On my arrival in England, Sir Daniel Cooper, Mr. Daintree, and I resumed the negotiations which had been commenced in Sydney, and which had been made the subject of “The Telegraph Cables Subsidy Agreement Ratification Act, 1873.” We were for some considerable time in constant communication with Messrs. Siemens Brothers, with whose representative in Sydney the preliminary arrangement had been negotiated; but it finally appeared that those gentlemen were not prepared to carry out the agreement as it stood, and they asked terms which, whether or not we approved of them, were beyond our powers.

4. It may be interesting to observe that, during these negotiations, we arrived at the conclusion that a route which included a land line up the Malay Peninsula would be open to much objection.

5. Immediately after we had terminated the negotiations with Messrs. Siemens Brothers, I commenced to negotiate, in virtue of the powers given to me by the Governor’s warrant, under the 9th section of the Act already mentioned, for a line between Australia and New Zealand. I invited Sir Daniel Cooper, as representing New South Wales, to obtain from his Government their consent to pay one-third of the cost. I was of opinion—from the negotiations some years before, between the Hon. Mr. Robinson (for New South Wales), the Hon. Mr. Lillie (for Queensland), and myself—that New South Wales would not object to paying such a proportion of the cost. Whilst Sir Daniel Cooper was communicating with his Government, I continued the negotiations on behalf of New Zealand.

6. I was at first inclined to incorporate with the project for connecting Australia and New Zealand the laying of a cable from the north part of the Province of Auckland to Norfolk Island, and thence to New Caledonia and to Fiji. I had reason to think that the Imperial Government, the French Government, and the Government of Fiji, might be induced to give assistance to such a plan. I found, however, that it would still involve a considerable additional cost to New Zealand, and that it would be a more economical plan to confine my attention to arranging for a cable to connect New Zealand with Australia.