

In other messages "special" was given in place of "speech," at the commencement of a message; *The Conference*. "Pow" for population, "collander" for commander, "mountin" for maintain, "revny" for recently; and other errors too numerous to mention.

But such extraordinary contortions often serve to destroy the whole meaning of a sentence. For instance, the word "Costi," in a message relating to the Eastern Question, was quite unintelligible, and had to be omitted. These instances could be multiplied to any extent, and are sometimes most aggravating as well as perplexing. The word "Powers" for "Porte" entirely subverted the whole meaning of a message.

15th January, 1877.

EUGENE C. AMSINCK, R.A.P.

#### MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

TUESDAY, 30TH JANUARY, 1877.

##### PRESENT :—

<i>New South Wales :</i>	The Hon. JOHN ROBERTSON. The Hon. ALEX. STUART. The Hon. J. F. BURNS.
<i>New Zealand :</i>	The Hon. G. McLEAN.
<i>Queensland :</i>	The Hon. SAMUEL WALKER GRIFFITH. The Hon. CHARLES STUART MEIN.
<i>South Australia :</i>	The Hon. Sir HENRY AYERS, K.C.M.G. The Hon. EBENEZER WARD.
<i>Tasmania :</i>	The Hon. JAMES WHYTE.
<i>Victoria :</i>	The Hon. R. S. ANDERSON. The Hon. R. RAMSAY.
<i>Western Australia :</i>	The Hon. MALCOLM FRASER.

The Hon. JOHN ROBERTSON, Colonial Secretary, New South Wales, in the Chair.

Mr. WILLIAM GREGOR TAYLOR, Superintendent and Electrician in charge of New Zealand Cable, called in and examined :—

1. *Sir Henry Ayers.*] Will you have the goodness, Mr. Taylor, to inform the Conference what is your opinion of the relative value of a cable to be laid from Singapore to Thursday Island, near Cape York, and one from Singapore, south of the present line to a point somewhere near Port Darwin?—Do you mean that it should pass through the Strait of Sunda?

2. My object is to obtain your opinion of the relative value of the two routes, the one coming to Port Darwin by Banjoewangie, and the other to Thursday Island?—I should say very strongly that a line coming to Port Darwin would be the most favourable; first, as being shorter, and because the line south of Singapore is now in fair order. There is a fair sea approaching Banjoewangie, and from Banjoewangie to Port Darwin the cable is in good order now. The greater portion of the first section is in deep water, and from Banjoewangie to Port Darwin the sea is well known and has been surveyed; whereas a line from Singapore south of Macassar to Thursday Island would be too long a section to be worked in one piece. The sea to the south of Borneo and Macassar has a very coralline bottom with shallow water, and would be unfavourable for a cable.

3. *Mr. Burns.*] What would be the difference in point of expense?—I am not prepared to answer that now.

4. Can you give us the difference in the matter of distance?—I suppose about 800 miles.

5. *Sir Henry Ayers.*] Which line in your opinion would be the best as a duplicate line to Singapore, having regard both to the longevity of the cable and the cost of construction and maintenance?—A line from Singapore to Banjoewangie and Port Darwin would be the best of any line that could connect these two points, for the simple reason that any other line in any other direction must be in a coralline sea with shallow water, and through seas imperfectly surveyed.

6. Have you any knowledge of the sea between Banjoewangie and the North-West Cape?—None whatever. There have never been any surveys there.

7. *Mr. Fraser.*] The distance from Nicol Bay to Banjoewangie is about 800 knots?—I think it is more than that.

8. *Mr. Mein.*] Have you any practical knowledge of the waters you have referred to?—Yes; five years ago I was electrician with the contractors, and was on board their ships while the cable was being laid, and last year I was sent in the steamer "Edinburgh" in charge of the work of repairing the cable by the Eastern Extension Company.

9. And you have naturally directed your attention to that route?—Yes.

10. So that you are not competent to pass an opinion on the other route, not having examined it?—I feel that I may form an opinion on the subject from the soundings that are given on the chart, from the surveys that have been made, and from my general knowledge of the nature of the seas among these islands. I have given my opinion from the observations I have made and from my general knowledge.

11. *Mr. Ramsay.*] I believe you were engaged in repairing a portion of the cable on the occasion of the last break?—Yes, we were engaged in repairing it from the 1st April to the 7th August.

12. From the experience you have gained during that time, from the improvements effected, and from what you have seen of its working, do you think the present cable is likely to be durable?—Yes, I think it is likely to last much longer without interruption than it has hitherto done. It is less likely to be injured by abrasion from the rocks, which was the cause of the break in April last, which occurred in shallow water. We have now reversed the cable and laid it in the deepest water available, and out of the reach of the coralline reefs. The present cable is a better one than the last,