

and they are carrying mails between England and America at a faster rate than ours are carried, and during the next seven years I have no doubt they will be carried much faster still. Mails have been delivered in Australia in a little over twenty-five days, and if the companies can do that of their own will when there is a thirty or thirty-two days' service, I think they will make it their business to deliver mails within twenty-five days if we call for tenders and insist upon it. It might be a question of a somewhat greater subsidy, but I am sure that all the colonies would pay a slightly increased rate to have a gain of five days in their mail service. To merchants and other business men five days means a great deal. They will be able to get goods and letters much quicker, and passengers will be more inclined to travel. Time means money, and the faster we compel these boats to travel, the better known will the colonies become, and the more popular as places of resort for European people.

Mr. C. TODD (S.A.): There is no necessity for the suggestion. When tenders are limited we should stipulate that the time is not to exceed, say, thirty days.

The Hon. A. WYNNE (V.): If you say thirty days they will take thirty days.

Mr. C. TODD (S.A.): If any company tenders for less than thirty days that would weigh with those who have to decide upon the tenders. I am sure that the colonies would give the preference to twenty-five days if the subsidy were not extravagantly high, and the companies in their own interests will tender for as speedy a service as possible. I think it would be sufficient to make the limit thirty days. At present it is  $32\frac{1}{2}$  days, and the average trip with the Orient boats is 28 days 22 hours 26 minutes, while with the P. and O. boats the average is 28 days 17 hours 20 minutes.

The PRESIDENT: I would suggest that after the words "thirty days" there be inserted the words "or such lesser time as tenderers may offer." I think that will meet the difficulty. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. C. TODD (S.A.): It may interest the representatives present if I mention some quick passages that have been made. The "Britannia" made the passage in 28 days, in March last year; the "Oceana" in 29 days in May last year; the "Ormuz" in 28 days in June; the "Oceana" in 27 days in October; and the "Australien" in 28 days.

Question, as amended, put and passed.

#### *Termini, Delay of Steamers, &c.*

The following recommendations were adopted without discussion:—

"That Brindisi and Naples, or either, be the European termini, and Adelaide the Australian terminus; but outward vessels to go on to Melbourne and Sydney, carrying mails to either of those ports if required. Homeward steamers to start from Sydney, calling at Melbourne and Adelaide, receiving, if required, the whole or a portion of the mails at Melbourne; to call at Albany both ways; the outward steamers to stay at that port not less than six hours."

"That the Postmaster-General, South Australia, be empowered to delay the departure of a steamer for a period not exceeding twenty-four hours, if such delay is deemed necessary in the interests of the Australian colonies or any of them."

"That in any future contract the term 'mails' shall be held to include parcels, but the parcels to be conveyed wholly by sea, as at present."

#### *Calling at Colombo.*

On the recommendation—

"That the steamers call at Colombo both ways"—

The Hon. A. WYNNE (V.) said: I do not think we should insist on the steamers calling at Colombo. It is some 500 miles out of the direct route, and calling there causes a loss of about two days. If the steamers ran direct from Aden to Albany, and coaled at the latter place, we should save at least two days. If they wish to call at Colombo, I would not object to their doing so, but it seems unreasonable to make it a condition of their contract that they shall go out of their course.

Mr. C. TODD (S.A.): The permanent heads of departments made this recommendation in the interests of the trade with India, which is a growing one. It would be a very long run from Port Said to Albany, for the boats do not coal at Aden. There is a growing tendency on the part of persons residing in India to make Australia a sanatorium, and those persons who come here in search of health carry away such an impression of the colonies as tends largely to encourage the exportation to that country of our products, especially wine. We also export to India large quantities of copper. If the steamers did not call at Colombo, it would put obstacles in the way of that trade and dislocate our mail service with India and China.

Question put and passed.

#### *Carriage of Frozen Meat, &c.*

On the recommendation—

"That it should be a condition of the new ocean mail contract that the steamers should be required to afford all conveniences for the carriage of frozen meat, fruits, and other products of Australasia, at stipulated maximum rates of freight for the same"—

Mr. C. TODD (S.A.) said: I moved that that condition should be inserted at the instance of Mr. Copley, who telegraphed to me as follows:—"When Conference is considering conditions of new ocean mail contracts, freights and conveniences for carriage of fresh fruits to England should be discussed. Freights are now very high and lower charges are necessary to encourage export and enable colonies to develop fruit production."