

mails as it pleases, as Mr. Ward suggested, that will get over a great deal of work at Adelaide, and it is a question which I respectfully suggest should be referred to medical experts—that is, to the medical officers on the boards of health. The Chairman of our Board of Health, who is a medical man, attaches very great importance to the matter, and I was compelled to fumigate all the mails coming from infected places, in the manner I have described.

The HON. J. KIDD (N.S.W.): Some plan might be adopted of insisting upon the owners of mail boats carrying out a provision that mails taken on board at infected ports should be fumigated when put on board. Of course, the steamers would be quarantined in the usual way. I think it is better that the bags should be fumigated, and then the mails be sent on to their destination, and fumigated by the colonies receiving them.

The PRESIDENT: We either believe that disease is likely to be spread through the country by the distribution of mail matter, or we do not. If we do not believe that, then we need not take any action; but if we do believe it, we must provide against such dissemination of infectious disease by the fumigation of the contents of mail bags. To fumigate the mail bags is of no use, as that will only kill the germs on the outside of the bags. Scientific and medical men tell us that disease can be carried, and is frequently carried, by the distribution of mail matter received from infected localities. That being so, we are bound to safeguard the people as far as possible by adopting the precautions recommended by experts. The medical men of our Central Board of Health insist that—"The whole of the contents of mails should be spread on the wire shelving, and exposed to sulphurous fumes for at least three hours continuously." If that is necessary, the fumigation of bags is not sufficient. It is suggested that to fumigate the mails at the first port of call would cause a delay of forty-eight hours; I do not think the delay would be so long if proper accommodation were provided, but even if it were, the people would sooner put up with that delay than run the risk of a terrible disease being introduced into the country; and it would be more economical to fumigate the mails at the first port of call than for each colony to do it separately. In any case, we should certainly not be justified in neglecting the precautions recommended by medical men.

Question put and passed.

The Conference then adjourned till 11 o'clock to-morrow.

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### WEDNESDAY, 22 MARCH, 1893.

The Conference met at 11 a.m.

#### PRESENT:

*New South Wales:* The Hon. JOHN KIDD, M.L.A., Postmaster-General.  
S. H. LAMBTON, Esq., Deputy Postmaster-General.  
P. B. WALKER, Esq., Secretary Telegraph Service.

*Victoria:* The Hon. AGAR WYNNE, M.L.C., Postmaster-General.  
JAMES SMIBERT, Esq., Deputy Postmaster-General.

*South Australia:* CHARLES TODD, Esq., C.M.G., M.A., F.R.S., Postmaster-General and Superintendent of Telegraphs.

*Western Australia:* RICHARD A. SHOLL, Esq., Postmaster-General.

*Tasmania:* The Hon. AGAR WYNNE, M.L.C., Acting for Postmaster-General, Tasmania.  
ROBERT HENRY, Esq., Superintendent of Telegraphs.  
HENRY BOYES, Esq., Secretary to the Post Office.

*New Zealand:* The Hon. J. G. WARD, M.H.R., Postmaster-General and Commissioner of Telegraphs.  
C. LEMON, Esq., Ph.D., Superintendent of Telegraphs.

*Queensland:* The Hon. THEODORE UNMACK, M.L.A., Minister for Railways and Postmaster-General (*President*).  
JOHN McDONNELL, Esq., Under Secretary to the Post and Telegraph Department and Superintendent of Telegraphs.

#### 4. CONSIDERATION OF CONTINUANCE OF GUARANTEE WITH CABLE COMPANY.

The Hon. J. KIDD (N.S.W.), in moving—

"That this Conference does not consider it desirable, after the recent arrangement as to rates, to give notice to the Eastern Extension Cable Company to terminate the existing guarantee"—  
said: The simple question before us is whether we are going to continue the guarantee with the Cable Company. The history of that guarantee, which is well known to those who took part in connection with it, is this: It was entered into to induce the Eastern Extension Company to agree to the reduction of the rates from something like 9s. 6d. to 4s. per word. The matter was very fully discussed at Adelaide in 1890, and a common understanding was arrived at that a guarantee should be entered into with the company under certain conditions. In February, 1891, in Sydney, the guarantee was agreed