

On the suggestion of the Hon. J. KIDD, the resolution was further amended to read as follows:—

“That it is desirable in the public interests that the hour zone system should be adopted in a modified form, so that there should be one time throughout Australia—viz., that of the 135th meridian, or nine hours east of Greenwich.”

Resolution, as amended, put and passed.

OCEAN MAIL CONTRACT.

Mr. R. A. SHOLL (W.A.) said: I wish to refer to one matter that was dealt with on Tuesday when we were considering the report brought in by the permanent heads of departments, and in explanation I wish to read the following extract from one recommendation in the Report:—“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.” It did not strike me at the time that was being dealt with that the present contract with the Orient Company arranges that the steamers shall also call in at Fremantle, or rather at Gages Roads, and I now wish to ask if the Conference will reconsider that recommendation in order to give me an opportunity of moving the insertion of the words “Fremantle or” before “Albany.” One of my reasons for wanting this is that we are now undertaking harbour works at the mouth of the River Swan, at Fremantle, and before a new mail contract is entered into those works will be finished, and larger vessels will be able to enter the harbour. It is quite possible that we shall want steamers to call at the principal port in the colony instead of Albany. The other matter is that my Government do not like the idea of steamers reaching Albany on Sunday, which will be very inconvenient for trade in every way. I move that the resolution be recommitted.

The PRESIDENT: Is it the will of the Conference that these subjects be reopened? Of course, when once business has been passed it ought to be final, or there will be no finality to our proceedings at all. If it is your desire I will put the motion.

Question put and passed.

TERMINI, DELAY OF STEAMERS, &c.

Mr. R. A. SHOLL (W.A.): I move that the resolution on page 9 of the printed report, under the head of “Termini, Delay of Steamers, &c.,” be amended by the insertion of the words “Fremantle or” before the word “Albany.”

The Hon. A. WYNNE (V.): Looking at the original contract for the existing service between the Postmaster-General of England and the Orient Company, I find that the purport of Mr. Sholl's suggestion is contained there. The contract gives the company the option of calling at Gages Roads in lieu of King George's Sound. I understand Gages Roads and Fremantle are the same.

Mr. R. A. SHOLL: The resolution only says Albany.

The Hon. A. WYNNE: There is no objection to the amendment. I was only showing that the very words you suggest are in the present contract.

Question put and passed.

TIME OF DEPARTURE OF MAILS FROM ADELAIDE.

Mr. R. A. SHOLL (W.A.): The recommendation that has been agreed to under this head says that the day of departure from Adelaide shall be Thursday, at 1 p.m., reaching Albany in 72 hours. I have received a telegram from Sir John Forrest, as follows:—

“Do not like the idea of steamers reaching Albany on Sunday. It will be very inconvenient for trade in every way, and I hope it will be altered.”

In deference to his wishes I ask that the matter may be reconsidered. If I must suggest a day for leaving Adelaide I would suggest Wednesday, as at present, in order to raise discussion on the subject.

The PRESIDENT: I must object to Wednesday because then we should have to travel our mails on Sundays.

Mr. R. A. SHOLL: Even as the matter stands now, Thursday is not a convenient day for the other colonies. However, it is only to raise the question that I ask that the day be altered. I know there is a great difference of opinion with regard to the matter, but I think that arrangement would be satisfactory to all the colonies.

Mr. C. TODD (S.A.): I suggest that, instead of 1, the hour should be 2 o'clock. My Minister has telegraphed to me again that 1 o'clock will be no improvement in the present arrangement. We are providing for rapid steamers; the voyage to Albany is to be completed in seventy-two hours, and I do not think it would place Western Australia to the slightest inconvenience, or cause any danger of the mails being too late for the train, if steamers left Adelaide at 2 o'clock. It must be remembered that 2 o'clock Adelaide time is half-past 12 Albany time. A seventy-two hour run would bring the steamers to Albany at 12:30. That gives five hours' margin, which would be a very great deal. I do not think Mr. Sholl can raise any reasonable objection to that proposal. I hope he will kindly concede the suggestion as a tentative measure, at all events, and if it is found wanting it can be altered.

The Hon. J. KIDD (N.S.W.): The most convenient way would be to recommit this matter to the permanent heads. They have given it some consideration, and have based a report upon it. I should like to hand in the following telegram I have received from the Sydney Chamber of Commerce in connection with the matter, and move that it be printed:—

“Sydney Chamber of Commerce respectfully suggest in new mail contract that mail steamers should leave Adelaide homewards on Saturdays Mails could close Brisbane Tuesday Sydney Thursday Melbourne