

a local man should be appointed as representative. Much might be said on that point, but I think that all the colonies would be only too anxious to secure the best man possible, and I agree that our representative should be thoroughly versed in the postal affairs of the colonies. I understand that, at a conference held at Adelaide on one occasion, one gentleman was appointed from the Post Office in London to represent the colonies at the Universal Postal Congress, but that is the only instance in which all the colonies have been represented by the same delegate. I do not think it would be wise to select the representative from among the Agents-General, as in doing so we should run a risk of creating jealousies, and there would be some difficulty in finding out which of them would render the best service. The better course, in my opinion, would be to appoint some one from the colonies. But it will be a question for consideration whether it might not be better for each colony to send a representative, one to be chosen as the delegate and the others to assist and advise him. The subject, however, requires more consideration than I have yet been able to give to it. We shall only be making a recommendation by carrying this resolution, and I support it for the reason that I consider it the best course to be followed in the future, and the appointment would then have been backed up by the resolution of a previous Conference. It is a course that I would approve of if I had a seat in the Conference of 1895. If the colonies decide to have a representative from each, or if—as at present in the case of the Hon. Mr. Wynne, who is acting on behalf of Tasmania as well as Victoria—two colonies have one representative for both, I think that it is worth our while to agree to this resolution for the purpose of making a recommendation.

The Hon. A. WYNNE (V.): Mr. President,—I entertain this resolution favourably, as I think we should have a live representative at the Universal Congress. We want a man who is in touch with colonial postal matters, and able to speak on behalf of all the colonies. It may be somewhat premature to discuss this matter fully at the present time, but it is well to place on record that the members of this Conference favour the motion. It will strengthen the hands of the next or the succeeding Conference. If we decide that it is advisable to send home a representative, it may then be discussed with regard to the number of permanent heads of departments who should accompany him. My personal feeling is that it is to the interests of the colonies that a person who is in touch with them should represent them at the Postal Congress, and I cordially support the motion.

Mr. C. TODD (S.A.): Mr. President,—I have nothing to say except that I most cordially support the motion of the Hon. Mr. Ward.

Mr. R. A. SHOLL (W.A.): I warmly support the resolution, and I perfectly agree with the Hon. Mr. Ward in that portion of his remarks which suggests that the representative should be the permanent head of one of the departments—one who has a full knowledge of all the details of the working of the Post and Telegraph Departments of the colonies. A motion like this will do a great deal more good than appointing one of the officials connected with the London Post Office, who has no local knowledge of the colonies or their requirements. Of course each colony may like to appoint representatives of their own to confer with the intercolonial delegate who is to vote at the Conference. They might then meet beforehand and decide upon the matters upon which the delegate has to record his vote. With regard to the Hon. Mr. Kidd's remark that this step is premature, perhaps he has in his mind annual Conferences. We cannot speak positively upon that point. It might happen that next year the necessity for a Conference will not be seen, and it can do no harm if this Conference records its opinion that it is necessary that the Australasian colonies should send a representative to the Congress.

The Hon. J. KIDD (N.S.W.): It was decided some time ago at Adelaide that there should be annual Conferences.

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with the practice adopted in preceding Conferences, the President takes part in the discussions, as he represents one of the colonies, and I therefore follow that precedent. At the outset I may say that I am entirely in touch with the proposal. The Hon. Mr. Kidd has not, perhaps, quite looked at the advantages to be derived from an expression of opinion, which is what this resolution aims at, and at the effect it will have upon future Conferences, and upon the various postal authorities, in leading them to mature their ideas and plans upon the subject. Whilst admitting the desirability of sending a man from Australasia who is entirely in touch with the requirements of the different colonies, we must not overlook the fact that whoever may be appointed will primarily be most intimately acquainted with the requirements of his own colony. Now, the diverse circumstances of the various colonies require a considerable amount of reflection before a vote is given upon any subject. We are labouring under this disadvantage, that whilst the colonies have to some extent diverse interests, they have got only one vote in the Postal Congress. This point should not be overlooked by the next Conference, and some instructions to the delegate should be framed, so that the views of the minority may be placed on record. It is apparent that our wants are not thoroughly understood in Europe, and it is just possible—although I should be very sorry to see it—that at some future day one or more of the colonies might decline to be bound by the regulations of the Congress. We have a right to look forward to such a remote contingency, and with that object in view I desire that we should be represented by one who will represent the whole of the interests of all the colonies. It must be the aim of any future Conference to select the most suitable man, and I am sure no local jealousy will be allowed to enter into the selection. (Hear, hear!) The colonies will, I am convinced, always be animated by that federal spirit of give and take, and through our frequent Conferences we know the value of the permanent heads of the departments, so that there will be no difficulty in making our selection. Before the delegate goes home various points can be discussed, and if there is any objection on the part of any colony to any course proposed, the opinion of that colony can be laid before the Congress. Looking at the fact that Australasia has only one vote at the Congress, that vote should be exercised by one who is thoroughly acquainted with the requirements of our postal affairs. At the same time each colony can, if it desires, send another representative. Such representatives would have the right of addressing the Congress, but would not be entitled to vote. That has been the practice hitherto. If we pass this resolution it will do a great deal of good by enabling some scheme to be matured by the various postal authorities to submit to the next Conference.

Mr.