

succeeded in obtaining the exclusive landing right for Queensland as well as the financial assistance of that Government and of that of New South Wales." And the Convention for the establishment and working of the cable in question forming part of the Bill laid before the French Chamber contains the following: "Article 2. The Société Française des Télégraphes Sous-Marins, which possesses the landing rights for the territory of the Queensland Government, undertakes to lay the cable and to have it open for working by the 22nd September, 1893, and to maintain it during the whole term of the concession." It would seem from this that either the Government of France or that of Queensland is under a thorough misapprehension on this point.

12. I think you will feel, as I do, great regret that the colonies of Australasia generally were not consulted by New South Wales and Queensland prior to the negotiations in question; and that these two colonies should, by taking independent action, have placed the others—I am sure unwittingly—in such an embarrassing position. It seems difficult to reconcile the statements made in defence of this matter with the actual documents. It were greatly to be wished that the position were as represented in the speeches—namely, that New South Wales and Queensland are under no engagement with the French company as to a future main cable; but I fear that it is not so. I am most reluctant to take a position of divergence from the two colonies, but it seems to me that we are in a dilemma; and that we must either fail in duty to the interests of our own colonies, or else at once announce our dissent from the action which has been taken in this matter.

13. Under all the circumstances, I propose to notify the Imperial Government, through His Excellency the Governor and the Agent-General, also the Government of Canada, of the position of this Government as regards the contract which has been made with the French company. I also intend to again address the Governments of New South Wales and Queensland, pointing out the extremely difficult position in which the other colonies are placed.

14. I would suggest the advisability of similar action by your Government, and shall be glad to learn your intentions.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Prime Minister, Wellington.

J. B. PATTERSON, Premier.

Enclosure 1 in No. 41.

The Hon. the PREMIER, Brisbane, to the Hon. the PREMIER, Melbourne.

Chief Secretary's Office, Brisbane,
8th December, 1892.

SIR,—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 17th November, referring to the contract recently entered into by the Governments of New South Wales and Queensland for the construction of a submarine telegraph cable from the Queensland shore to New Caledonia.

Mr. Unmack, Postmaster-General of this colony, laid the correspondence relating to this matter before the Postal Conference held at Hobart in March last. It will be found in the Report of the Proceedings of the Conference at pp. 72–9.

The subject was briefly discussed at the evening sitting of the Conference on the 18th March, Mr. Gavan Duffy, Postmaster-General of Victoria, taking part in the discussion, which is recorded at p. 97 of the report.

The negotiations then pending having been thus formally brought under the notice of the Governments represented at the Conference, and no offer having been afterwards made by any of them to join the Governments of New South Wales and Queensland in the obligations proposed to be incurred, nor any objection offered on their behalf to the completion of the negotiations, it was assumed by the Government of this colony, and I presume by that of New South Wales, that the other Governments did not dissent from the proposed action.

The negotiations have since been completed, and I understand that the laying of the cable from Queensland to New Caledonia will shortly be commenced.

I regret, for my own part, that all the Australian colonies have not joined in the contract, but in the present condition of affairs—to be remedied, I think, only by the establishment of a Federal Government—such common action appears to be impracticable.

I am unable to offer any opinion on the question whether the cable now proposed to be laid will eventually form part of a line connecting Australia with America. This Government is, however, very anxious that such a line should be established at as early a date as possible, and it has been this desire which, as no doubt you are aware, has induced it to refrain from joining in any contract likely to continue for an indefinite period the monopoly now enjoyed by the Eastern Extension Company. In the meantime, I think that the establishment of telegraphic communication with New Caledonia, even if the line goes no further, will be of sufficient advantage both commercially and politically to the Australian colonies to justify the action taken by this Government in conjunction with that of New South Wales.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. W. Shiels, M.P., Prime Minister, Melbourne.

S. W. GRIFFITH.

Enclosure 2 in No. 41.

MR. SANDFORD FLEMING said (*vide* pp. 212–13 of Report of Proceedings of London Colonial Conference, 1887): "It is only necessary to look at a telegraph map of the world to see how dependent on Foreign Powers Great Britain is at this moment for the security of its telegraphic communication with Asia, Australasia, and with Africa; in fact, it may be said that the telegraphic communication between the Home Government and every important division of the Empire, except Canada, is dependent on the friendship (shall I say the protection?) of Turkey. Is not Turkey continually exposed to imminent danger from within? Is she not in danger of falling a prey to covetous neighbours whose friendship towards Great Britain may be doubted? . . . The Otto-