

man Government, on which we depend for communication with India and Australia and the Cape Colonies, appears continually exposed to impending disaster. . . . From Vancouver, cables may be laid to Australasia by way of Hawaii, or they may be laid from one British island to another, and thus bring New Zealand and all the Australian colonies directly into telegraphic connection with Great Britain, without passing over any soil which is not British, and by passing only through seas as remote as possible from any difficulties which may arise in Europe."

No. 42.

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

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 1st June, 1893.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your circular letter of the 8th May, on the subject of the contract entered into by Queensland and New South Wales for a telegraphic cable to New Caledonia.

I agree with you that it is to be regretted the other colonies were not previously consulted by the Governments of Queensland and New South Wales; but I fail to see that by their independent action they have placed the other colonies in an embarrassing position, or that any sanction can be held to have been given by the Hobart Postal Conference. I regret, therefore, that this Government cannot see its way to take any action in the matter.

I have, &c.,

R. J. SEDDON,

Premier.

The Hon. the Premier, Melbourne, Victoria.

No. 43.

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

SIR,—

Premier's Department, Melbourne, 15th June, 1893.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1st instant, in reply to my circular letter of the 8th May, informing me of the views held by your Government on the subject of the agreement entered into by the Governments of Queensland and New South Wales for the construction of a telegraphic cable to New Caledonia.

I have, &c.,

J. B. PATTERSON, Premier.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

SINGAPORE-HONG KONG CABLE.

No. 44.

The MANAGER in AUSTRALASIA, Eastern Extension Company, to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

The Eastern Extension Australasia and China Telegraph Company (Limited),
Melbourne, 10th March, 1893.

SIR,—

I have the honour to inform you that, as telegraphic communication between Hong Kong and the rest of the British Empire at present passes through French territory on the one side and Russian on the other, making it very weak and insecure in the case of political complications arising, the necessity for a second cable between Singapore and Hong Kong—avoiding Saigon altogether—has long been felt, and for the past eight years has formed the subject of considerable negotiation between this company and local and Home authorities.

Nothing practicable, however, resulted, owing to the necessary monetary assistance to enable the company to carry out such a costly undertaking (over £300,000) not having been forthcoming from the local Governments or Mother-country.

The question has, however, lately been revived by interruptions to the Singapore-Saigon cable causing a diversion of the traffic *via* Siberia, to the great inconvenience of the Governments and the public; and as the company are now in a better financial position than when the subject was first mooted they are prepared to make a considerable monetary sacrifice by at once laying a second cable *without any subsidy*, provided they are given preference of supplying any further cables in Hong Kong-Singapore waters required to meet public wants, as was granted by Egypt and India to the Eastern Telegraph Company some years ago.

The Singapore and Hong Kong Governments, supported by the Chamber of Commerce, have expressed their readiness to grant this, and the Secretary of State for the Colonies is also favourable to it.

As the direct cable from Singapore to Hong Kong would be also advantageous to the telegraphing community of Australasia, the Chairman would like to have an expression from you to lay before Lord Ripon as to the provision asked for, viz.: Whether you see any objection to this company having the privilege of laying any further cables in the Singapore-Hong Kong waters that may be required to meet the future public wants.

The Victorian and South Australian Governments have approved of such a privilege being granted, and recognise the advisability of having independent telegraphic communication with Hong Kong that will be free from foreign interference.

I shall be glad if you will favour me with an early reply.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. J. G. Ward,

Postmaster-General of New Zealand.

WM. WARREN,

Manager in Australasia.