

purpose to bring this matter before my Government, I shall commit myself to a portion of the subsidy which is necessary, and commit myself to asking Parliament for that subsidy. I think I should mislead hon. members if I were to vote, because I am satisfied that to ask Parliament for a subsidy is out of the question until developments take place which will more closely identify Tasmania with this service. While I may express the interest I feel in the developments which must take place by bringing Australia into closer communication with other parts of the world, I cannot commit the people of Tasmania at the present moment to the resolution. May I call to the minds of hon. members that within the past few months I think it was the representative of New Zealand urged very strongly, at the Conference of Delegates meeting from all parts of Australia, that the time for subsidies was passing by. I may be met by the remark that that statement cannot apply to the new service, but it is well for us to consider whether the time for subsidies is not passing by. Not many years ago Tasmania was desirous of having a port of arrival, if not of departure, of large ocean-going steamers. It was considered it would be advantageous to offer subsidies. We avoided or evaded or postponed the offering of such subsidies, but there has been no change in the services. The competition was such that development of trade took place without subsidies. When we think of the small sum of money with which the present mail steamers to Europe are subsidised as compared with the trade which they do, it appears infinitesimal. I have arrived at the conclusion that the time for subsidies is passing away, but whether we have arrived at that stage in 1895 I am not prepared to state. I make these remarks regretfully in one sense, for I would like, in conferences of this kind, that we should be unanimous in our reception or rejection of a proposal of this kind, and that we should feel that there is no matter of business or commerce connected with Australasia in which we are not all interested.

Dr COCKBURN It is impossible for anyone to bind himself to a proposal of this nature before he knows what the conditions are. As far as South Australia is concerned, we want to see every possible kind of trade or mail communication with the old world and Canada, and with America. Report says, however, that the Colonies further removed from the Eastern shores could not be expected to give a subsidy for this route; and I am afraid that is the position of South Australia. I think, with the previous speaker, that it is a pity we should refrain from expressing our active sympathy with this extra link of communication, because we do not wish to bind our respective Governments, but, at the same time, if to vote for this motion means to bind our Government to seek a subsidy from Parliament, I shall not be able to support it.

The PRESIDENT I agree with Mr Fysh in hoping for the time when the different parts of Australia will not be hampered by their geographical position, but will be under one head as far as postal and telegraphic matters are concerned, and will work as one body for the benefit of Australia as a whole. There are several matters in which we are so hampered by our geographical position that we cannot act with that unity with which we should like to do. Mr Ward has put a conundrum to us which may be answered in two ways. If it is our sympathy he wants, he can have it; if it is our cash he wants, I am afraid, as far as Victoria is concerned, that it won't be forthcoming at the present time. The Southern and Western Colonies and New South Wales have established an expensive mail service, which, as a mail service, is ample and complete for those particular Colonies. We all sympathise with New Zealand and Queensland, and all Australia ought to sympathise with them, in the effort they are making to push their trade in the Pacific; for, although we get no direct benefits, we get them indirectly, and for this we pay a certain amount indirectly. As far as Victoria is concerned, however, the matter must remain in that stage for the present.

Mr FYSH I beg to suggest to Mr Ward that he makes it clear to us what we are to understand by "subsidising?"

Mr WARD I will make the matter quite clear, and I therefore ask that the latter portion of the resolution, from the word "upon," be deleted, thus re-affirming the resolution of the former Conference. That, I think, will remove any objections hon. members may have to urge. I would like to say one or two words in reply, in order to remove some misconceptions which exist in the minds of hon. members. Looking at it broadly, hon. members must agree that it is to the general interest of Australia to have this line of communication, and that indirectly we must all reap a certain amount of benefit. That being so, I do not think a matter such as this should be approached other than in a broad way, and, in the interests of the whole of Australasia, a service such as this should have the goodwill of the whole of the Colonies. In reply to Mr. Cook, I may say that this service would spend yearly in Sydney at least £80,000, and if any other port in Australia were to obtain such an expenditure, I feel sure their representatives would feel called on to support my proposal. The steamers would take 3000 tons of coal a month, and would spend £5000 in the same time for the ordinary supplies of the ships. This line would therefore be more to the benefit of New South Wales than any other Colony. So far as New Zealand is concerned, I can affirm that, directly, we would obtain no advantage. I am exceedingly obliged to the President for his sympathy. We have his sympathy; that is something, though, as a substitute for cash, I am bound to say it is not worth much. In the absence of the cash, however, I am glad to have the sympathy of a great colony like Victoria. My object, however, has been attained; and I desire to move the resolution, with the alteration I have suggested.

Motion, as amended, put and passed.