

whole of them. I support the proposal of Mr Ward, with a view of inducing the Government of Victoria to review their position, if they only maintain their present guarantee for 1895. It is worth while making a great effort rather than reverting to the rates we paid heretofore. For this reason I hope we will not be left here in Tasmania to maintain the cable at our own charges for the benefit of the whole of the neighbouring Colonies. We must have a practical sympathy shown by a monetary contribution from the various Governments. I hope, therefore, the wishes of this Conference will be conveyed to his colleagues in Melbourne by Mr Duffy, and that before this agreement ceases to exist there will have been such a revival in the business of the cables and telegraphs that he will feel warranted in recommending his Government to reconsider their present determination.

The PRESIDENT There was one remark which fell from Mr Fysh which I prefer to misunderstand, and that was one which seemed to convey to my mind a fear of Victoria instituting a preferential rate as against Tasmania. I move in this matter with the greatest reluctance and regret. I was instrumental in carrying this matter into being. It was first mooted in 1890, Queensland or New Zealand not coming in. When the Conference met in 1891 in Sydney I was strongly urged that it would be unwise of Victoria and the other Colonies to undertake the responsibility themselves, but I regarded it as being of benefit to our commerce in these seas and the whole of the British Empire that the reduction should be made. I therefore proposed the present arrangement at the Conference, and succeeded in carrying it through our Parliament. Therefore it is with regret that I find myself called on four years afterwards to undo the work; but, on looking into the figures, I found that the brunt in this matter had to be borne by New South Wales and Victoria, and with the latter Colony it had proved anything but a nominal guarantee up to the present—it has proved a greater financial loss than we expected. In our prosperous days we did not mind this, but now we are compelled to economise in every possible way. I felt that in this matter we must have some finality and get rid of these guarantees as soon as we could get out of them. The figures placed before me to a great extent actuated me, especially as things might be worse and the decrease greater next year. I felt it was a duty that I owed to the Colony to get rid of this expense as soon as I could. I would suggest to Mr Ward that he withdraw his motion for the present, and that a Committee meeting be arranged between myself and the other members of the Conference and the representative of the Cable Company, whom, I understand, is at present in Hobart. If any *modus vivendi* can be arrived at, I will rescind the notice of withdrawal without troubling my colleagues.

Mr WARD I will comply with the suggestion you have made, Mr President, and ask permission to withdraw my motion. The course you have suggested is agreeable to the other Members of the Conference, and I hope a solution of the difficulty may be arrived at in Committee. Now I wish to state that the actual amount New Zealand paid last year was £6234 1s. 8d. for cable guarantees only. I don't want it to be thought that we are asking Victoria and New South Wales to bear a greater proportion of the contribution than we are paying, we want to do what is right in the matter. Our payment, taking our population into consideration, amounts to a very considerable sum larger than Victoria has to pay towards these cable guarantees. We are paying, not only what we agreed to pay, but a greater amount than was agreed to at the time the rates were fixed. We should, I think, pass a resolution calling on the Imperial Government to consider the position of the international cable business of these colonies, pointing out that they pay nothing whatever, although they have merchants receiving the advantages of the cheap rates, and that in the interests of trade and commerce it is only fair that they should assist to enable the whole of the Colonies to secure the benefits—commercial, national, political, and social—which low cable charges bring about, without being unduly taxed.

The Conference then went into Committee.

On resumption of Conference—

Mr WARD said that the matter had been considered in Committee, and he would now move the following resolution :—

“ That the several Colonies agree to guarantee international revenue to the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company of £227,000 per year, and to make up any loss below that amount, provided that the total payment in any one year shall not exceed £10,000, and to guarantee a revenue of £20,000 on the New Zealand Cable, and to make up any loss below that sum, provided the payment in any one year shall not exceed £9000; provided always, that rates not higher than those now ruling be charged by the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company during currency of such guarantee such arrangement to be from year to year, and terminable at two months' notice.”

Mr COOK seconded the motion, which was agreed to.

Compulsory Telegraphic Code.

Mr WARD : Probably it is within the recollection of Members of this Conference that at the Telegraphic Conference held in Paris in 1890 it was proposed to establish an official vocabulary of code words for cabling. I do not know if Hon. Members have seen the proposed vocabulary it is intended to use, but I have seen some of the words, and in my opinion they are not such as ought to be forced upon private people, or those who wish to use cable codes. I presume