

THURSDAY, 19 NOVEMBER, 1896.

The Conference resumed at 2:50 p.m.

The minutes of the previous sitting were read and confirmed.

The Hon. Mr. COOK : We had better proceed first to have the report of the permanent heads.

Mr. Lambton, upon being called on by the Chairman, submitted the reports from the permanent heads on the questions of the ocean mail service, the Washington Congress, and the list of matters of importance and urgency selected by them for the consideration of the Conference, as per Appendix B.

The Hon. Mr. COOK : We had better deal with the Washington proposals first, I think. Shall we take the proposals *seriatim* or not?

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY : *Seriatim*.

Mr. Lambton then proceeded to read the report on representation at the Washington Postal Union Congress in May, 1897.

On section 2, "Reduction of Sea Transit Rates," being read,—

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY asked : What would the effect be as regards Australia?

Sir CHARLES TODD : It will be to our advantage.

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN : Our sea transit rates are for mostly over 3,500 miles, and those remain at the maximum rate.

Sir CHARLES TODD : We would still gain. It is all in our favour.

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN : It is practically raising the rates.

Sir CHARLES TODD : No ; it will reduce the rates for the shorter distances.

On section 4, "*Re* indemnity for the loss of registered articles," being read,—

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY said : That does not affect us.

Mr. LAMBTON : It affects Queensland.

The Hon. Mr. COOK : This clause limits the amount payable.

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN : It commits us up to that limitation. Why should we bother about this?

Sir CHARLES TODD : Some countries admit the principle, and we may all be forced into it ultimately, and compelled to recognise it.

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN : Is not the time when they seek to enforce this the time to make the stipulation? It could be construed into a precedent.

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM : Does not this proposal come from West Australia?

Mr. LAMBTON : And Queensland and New Zealand, too.

On section 5, "Use of stamp,—Postage paid," being reached,—

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN remarked : We insist on stamps in all cases.

Sir CHARLES TODD : Some Colonies do not.

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM : You do not collect anything on them in your colony?

Sir CHARLES TODD : Oh, yes, we do! We send in our accounts, but in some Colonies payment is made by a lump sum.

After the reading of the recommendations of the permanent heads of departments had been concluded,—

The Hon. Mr. COOK asked : Is there anything to take exception to in that Report?

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM moved,—“That the Report be adopted, subject to such additions and amendments as may be forwarded by the Colonies previous to the departure of the Australasian Delegate for Washington.”

Seconded by the Hon. Mr. THYNNE, and carried.

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM asked whether any letter had been received from the Postmaster-General of Western Australia, embodying any suggestions he had to make to this Conference.

Mr. LAMBTON : Yes ; and they have been included and provided for.

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY : Have you dealt with the Victorian suggestions?

Mr. LAMBTON : Yes.

Mr. LAMBTON then read a further report from the permanent heads on matters of importance and urgency for consideration by the Conference. (*See Appendix.*)

Section 16, "Parcel Post Convention with France."

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY : What would be the effect of this monetarily?

Mr. LAMBTON : We have no Convention now.

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY : Is there any prospect of anything being done under it?

Mr. LAMBTON : Yes.

The Hon. Mr. COOK : I understand Mr. Duffy wants to know, has France agreed to the proposal?

Mr. LAMBTON : Yes, practically.

Section 7, "Alteration of Telegraph Code"

The Hon. Mr. COOK : I understand there are only eleven letters different in the International code and the code we use.

Sir CHARLES TODD : Eleven, and figures as well. New Zealand, Tasmania, West Australia, and the Cable Co. use the International code.

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM : Could not the change be made on the 1st of March?

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN : Let it stand at the 1st July.

Section 22, "Electric Light and Power Regulations."

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY : We want an Act first. We cannot have regulations before an Act is passed.

The Hon. Mr. COOK : Victoria already has an Act dealing with the matter. The best plan seems to me for each colony to get its Act first, and then try and frame regulations.

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY : We could not well alter our regulations in any material particular just as we are starting the thing.

Sir CHARLES TODD : We should have uniform regulations.

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY : I do not see you can do anything till you have passed your Acts.

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM : No harm can come from suggesting draft regulations.

The Hon. Mr. THYNNE : If the electrical men here draft regulations they could submit them to Mr. Cook.

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN : Leave out the request for uniformity.

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY : Our electrical man is not represented at all. It is intended to submit the matter to those present.

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