

With reference to the subsidiary Treaties referred to in the Hon. Mr. Duffy's Motion, time has not permitted of a careful examination of the untranslated Book of Proceedings recently received from Washington, but we understand that these Treaties do not materially, if at all, affect the Australasian Colonies.

With regard to the *optional provisions of the Washington Principal Convention*, we report as follows :—

1. *Article 6.*—The *registration fee* is fixed at “25 centimes, ($2\frac{1}{2}d.$) at most,” but, under Article 2 of the Final Protocol, “it is agreed that the States outside Europe are authorised to maintain the maximum at 50 centimes ($5d.$).” Under these circumstances *the Colonies need not alter their present charge for registration*, which is ($3d.$), and we advise accordingly.

2. *Article 7.*—Administrations agreeing thereto may exchange *registered correspondence marked with trade charges*, up to 1000 francs (£40) to be collected on delivery ; the proceeds (less charges of collections, &c.), to be remitted to the senders of such correspondence.

The Colonies decided in 1892 not to adopt the system, and again at the present Conference.

3. *Article 8.*—This provides for the payment of an *indemnity* of 50 francs (£2) “in case of the loss of a registered article and except in cases beyond control,” but under Article 3 of the Final Protocol, “it is agreed, as a temporary measure, that Administrations of Countries outside Europe whose legislation is at present opposed to the principle of responsibility, retain the option of postponing the application of that principle until they shall have been able to obtain from the Legislature authority to introduce it.

We recommend the adoption of this provision, and that it be extended inland and intercolonially from 1st January next.

4. *Article 9.*—Where the legislation of a country permits, the sender of a letter or other article can have it *withdrawn from the post*, or have its address altered, so long as such article has not been delivered to the addressee.

No objection to this, it being our present practice.

5. *Article 13.*—In countries which consent to undertake the service in their reciprocal relations a system may be adopted under which, at the request of the senders, and on their paying in advance a sum of $3d.$ for each article, all classes of correspondence are sent to the addressees by a *special messenger* immediately on arrival in the country of destination.

We do not recommend this system, as it is not practicable in sparsely populated districts.

6. *Regulation 6.*—It will be necessary for the Colonies to consider whether they are in a position to make up their postage stamps in the stipulated colours :—

$2\frac{1}{2}d.$ in dark blue,
 $1d.$ in red,
 $\frac{1}{2}d.$ in green.

We see no objection.

7. *Regulation 11.*—Administrations, whose Inland Regulations do not admit of the use of *labels (R)* in connection with registered articles, may postpone their introduction, and continue to use *stamps* for the indication of registered articles.

The present practice is to mark registered letters with a blue or red cross, and impressed with the letter “R,” which we find answers every purpose, and we advise its continuance.

Nos. 74, 85.—“Mode of counting and charging Telegrams. Disputes with the public as to what are Cipher Words. (Orders for parts of Machinery).” “*Re numbers as well as words appearing in Telegrams.*”

We recommend that figures be not allowed in the text of Inland or Intercolonial messages, but that amounts or numbers be written and signalled in words only. Isolated letters or groups of letters having no connective meaning shall be charged as one word for each letter.

Nos. 75, 78.—“System of counting words in Inland and Intercolonial Ordinary Telegrams.” “Counting double names in Telegrams.”

We suggest that these matters be referred to a Sub-Committee, to consist of Sir Chas. Todd, Mr. P. B. Walker, Mr. John Hesketh, and Mr. Geo. Smibert, to be settled by correspondence.

No. 80.—“Suggested abolition of additional charge on cipher words contained in Inland and Intercolonial telegrams.”

With reference to the extra rate now levied on cipher words, we recommend that no extra rate be charged on any English Dictionary word containing not more than 15 letters. The above is intended to apply to both Inland and Intercolonial telegrams.

No. 82.—“Intercolonial Telegraph Repeats.”

It is desirable that the practice of the Colonies should be uniform in dealing with the question of repeats, and it is recommended that the Resolution, No. 43, of the Brisbane Conference, March, 1893, be adhered to. The Resolution in question is as follows :—