

connection by telephone between the various metropolitan centres if it could be done on a commercial basis. It appeared, however, that the cost would be out of proportion to the benefits derived from its establishment. Long distance wires were becoming the fashion, but whether the time had arrived for the system to be established among the colonies he was not prepared to say. It would be advisable to refer the matter to the heads of the departments. If the cost was shown to be reasonable as regarded its construction, he did not think that anyone would object to its introduction. He moved—

“That the matter be referred to the Heads of Departments, with a view of ascertaining what the cost would be, and also information as to the possible loss to the telegraphic revenue.”

Hon. J. GAVAN DUFFY seconded the motion. He was not prepared to say that Victoria would, at first, be prepared to take part in the undertaking. If the telephonic system were adopted, it would, of course, destroy to a certain extent the revenue derived from the telegraph. Such things would progress, however, and the telephone in course of time would almost completely supersede the telegraph. He had at times used the telephone, which extended over a long distance, and had found it to work well.

Hon. J. G. JENKINS supported the proposal. A great deal of information had been obtained in 1892, but no doubt things had very much changed since then. At the time to which he referred it was shown that the undertaking, if entered upon, would cause a heavy loss. He had no objection, however, to further information being obtained with reference to the matter.

Hon. J. R. DICKSON also approved of the subject being considered by the heads of departments. He agreed with the Hon. Joseph Cook that the telephonic system was bound to come. It was only a question of time. They must not rest content with the facilities that were at present enjoyed. In Queensland one of the gold-mining towns was connected with Townsville, a distance of 82 miles. The same wire used for the telegraph was also utilised for the telephone, and the results were in every way satisfactory. It would be a wise thing to refer the matter to the permanent heads to report upon.

The motion was put and passed. (See Report of Sub-Committee, p. 76.)

Adjournment.

The Conference adjourned until 10-30 A.M. next day.

FRIDAY, 1ST APRIL.

Papers.

The PRESIDENT laid on the table the minute of his appointment as a Delegate to the Conference; also Post and Telegraph Returns, (Tasmania).

Hon. J. G. JENKINS (South Australia) tabled the Minute of his appointment.

The Washington Conference.

In the matter of the ratification of Washington Congress, and consideration of the various Conventions entered into at Washington but not signed by the Australasian Delegate;

Hon. J. GAVAN DUFFY moved—

“That this Conference recommends to the Governments of Australasia the ratification of the treaty entered into at Washington at the last Universal Postal Congress. That the Sub-Committee of Permanent Heads be requested to report to the Conference—1st. On the several matters left optional by the principal treaty; 2nd. On the various subsidiary treaties entered into by some Administrations at Washington, but not signed by the Australasian Delegate.”

In rising to move this resolution, he said he thought that in the first place he should take this first public occasion offered him of thanking his fellow Postmaster-Generals for the honour and distinction which they conferred upon him in sending him to the Washington Congress as the representative of Australasia. He would never forget their having done so, and the kind manner in which it was done. Where every one was so kind in the matter, it would perhaps be improper to single out individuals; but he could hardly pass on without mentioning the Hon. Joseph Cook, Postmaster-General of New South Wales, who, if he had pressed his claim to have gone to the Congress it could scarcely have been refused. In thanking them he would say he was especially proud of the Commission because he was, he believed, the first to have held a Commission for all the Colonies of Australasia for any purpose. On that occasion he looked upon himself in some respects as a forerunner of the Federation they were all hoping now to see brought about. Having described the gathering as a most interesting one, with representatives from every independent nation in the world, the picturesqueness of some of the costumes worn, such as that of the representative of Corea, the hospitality enjoyed, and the great ability many delegates displayed—though at the same time he felt that Australasia had occasion to be proud of its Todds and its Lambtons, and others whom he met at the Australasian Postal Conferences—the speaker said: The result of