

SATURDAY, 2ND APRIL.

*Papers.*

Hon. J. G. JENKINS tabled Statistics of the South Australian Post and Telegraph Department for 1897.

*Report of Sub-Committee.*

The Conference continued consideration of the Report of the Sub-Committee of Permanent Heads.

On the question of intercolonial telegraph rates, resolution of Conference of Chambers of Commerce *re* intercolonial telegraph charges, reduction of New South Wales telegraph rates, and alteration in mode of charging on inland and intercolonial telegrams;

The Permanent Heads Committee presented a lengthy report explaining the position. The question of reducing the rates—2s. for the first 10 words, and 2d. each additional word on telegrams between New South Wales and Queensland, has been under consideration on several occasions. They concluded:—

“We are still of opinion that any re-arrangement of charges should be on the basis of charging for every word, whether in addresses or text. This is the international principle. We would also respectfully point out that the present rates appear very reasonable when the great distances covered and the small population are taken into consideration. They compare very favourably with those obtaining in Europe.”

On the motion of the Hon. J. GAVAN DUFFY, the Report was considered in Committee.

Upon the Conference resuming,

The PRESIDENT read the following formulated Resolution that had been drawn up:—

“That this Conference regrets that owing to the financial losses involved, the question of a general reduction in the prices of Intercolonial telegrams must stand over for the present, and makes no suggestion on the question of limitation of addresses.”

Hon. J. GAVAN DUFFY would like to add to that Resolution, that it was suggested that the Post Office Departments of New South Wales and Queensland might make an arrangement between themselves as regards the telegrams passing between those two Colonies. He moved that the following be the words added:—

“But it is suggested that the Governments of New South Wales and Queensland should arrange between themselves as to the limitation of words and addresses.”

Hon. J. G. JENKINS seconded.

Hon. J. R. DICKSON, before the motion was put, wished to say, for the purpose of recording the position he occupied, that his Colony desired that a closer arrangement should be made not only between New South Wales and Queensland, but also with the other Colonies. In the meantime he had moved in Committee a Resolution for the purpose of re-approaching New South Wales. It was as follows:—

“That any re-arrangement in charging may be on the basis either of charging for every word, whether in addresses or text, such being the International principle, or of allowing the address and signature to the number of 12 words to be sent free.”

The Government he represented would be quite prepared to enter into an arrangement with New South Wales on the basis of that between New South Wales and Victoria, subject only to restrictions being placed on the number of words in the addresses. His Government was prepared to join New South Wales in a tariff of 10 words for 1s. text, and allow either 10 or 12 words for address and signature. He wished that to be understood, so that the fact might be recorded that he had done all he could to make a satisfactory arrangement as between New South Wales and Queensland. He hoped negotiations to that effect would be successful. There was a strong feeling in his Government in favour of adhering to the principle of the International Bureau. Queensland might enforce her own system within her own territory, but did not like the idea of telegrams coming from New South Wales being surcharged across the border.

Hon. JOSEPH COOK said it seemed to him that what Mr. Dickson had said went a long way towards what was desired. When he (Mr. Cook) returned to Sydney he would have the whole question of the average number of words in signatures and addresses connected with messages travelling between New South Wales and Queensland looked into, and unless he found some very violent reasons he would be glad to fall in with Mr. Dickson's wishes. On the other hand, he hoped that if he found New South Wales telegrams were not passing the limit, Mr. Dickson would take a common-sense view of the matter.

The Resolution was then passed.

Hon. J. GAVAN DUFFY moved—

“That the Motion introduced by Hon. J. R. Dickson in Committee, but which was not seconded, be placed upon the Records.”

Hon. J. G. JENKINS seconded, and the motion was agreed to.