

project by the proposals of the Eastern Extension Australasia and China Telegraph Company. These have led to a difference of opinion among the Governments of the Australasian Colonies, which will retard any definite action on the part of this colony until the report of the Pacific Cable Committee is received.

The proposals were considered at the Conference of Premiers in Sydney in the last week of January. New Zealand was not represented, and I am not yet in possession of an official report of the proceedings. I learn, however, from the Press that Mr. Warren has recommended his company to agree to forego the concession of terminal facilities until the Pacific cable is completed, and to reduce its rates at once. The Conference also adopted the recommendations made by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the effect that rates once reduced should not be increased, and that the landing-points of the cable should not be determined upon without consultation with the British military authorities. It is reported to-day by Press telegram that the assent of the company has been obtained.

I have, &c.,

J. G. WARD (for the Premier).

The Hon. W. P. Reeves, Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

No. 128.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to Mr. J. C. LOCKLEY, Nhill.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 5th March, 1900.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 21st ultimo [not printed], forwarding copy of one addressed by you to the Attorney-General for Victoria, urging that the first section of the Pacific cable, viz., from Australia to Fiji, with a branch from Norfolk Island to New Zealand, should be laid at an early date. Your letter and the enclosure will be submitted to the Postmaster-General as desired.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY, Secretary.

J. C. Lockley, Esq.,

Proprietor, The Nhill Electric Light, Nhill, Victoria.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to Mr. J. C. LOCKLEY, Nhill.

No. 129.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 14th March, 1900.

Adverting to my letter of the 5th instant, I have the honour to inform you that your communication of the 21st ultimo, together with copy of one addressed to the Attorney-General for Victoria urging that the first section of the Pacific cable, viz., from Australia to Fiji, with a branch from Norfolk Island to New Zealand, should be laid at an early date, has been submitted for the consideration of the Postmaster-General.

The Hon. Mr. Ward desires me to reply that as the matter of the Pacific cable is under the control of a Board in London, on behalf of the several countries interested, no independent action can be taken by this Government in the direction indicated by you.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS ROSE, for the Secretary.

J. C. Lockley, Esq.,

Proprietor, Nhill Electric Light, Nhill, Victoria.

No. 130.

CIRCULAR LETTER from Sir SANDFORD FLEMING regarding the Pacific Cable Project.

THE PACIFIC CABLE.

Ottawa, 30th March, 1900.

To the British People in the Australasian Colonies :

THE position of the Pacific cable project has become so critical that I make bold, on the eve of the departure of the monthly Australasian mail, to make this appeal to you, my fellow colonists. I have no other excuse to offer for my temerity than the circumstances under which I write.

Australasians and Canadians have long desired to be connected telegraphically. For many years they have looked forward to the time when the British people in the outer Empire would be drawn nearer to each other, and when all would be brought into closer and more intimate relations with the Imperial centre. They have regarded the Pacific cable as a practical bond of union which would foster trade and commerce, and, at the same time, constitute the easy and inexpensive means by which they would exchange their thoughts on all matters in which they have a common interest.

The British people on opposite sides of the Pacific are, in a large measure, strangers to each other, and without the electric bond they cannot but remain estranged. True, it may be said that the means already exist for communicating by telegraph between the two countries. It is possible to send a telegram from Canada across the Atlantic to England, across Europe, or by way of the Mediterranean, to Egypt, across African soil to the Red Sea, by the Indian Ocean to India, and thence through Asiatic lands, seas, and islands (partly in foreign hands) to Australia. But the circuitous route is little used; it may be said to be employed only in emergencies or on extremely rare occasions, owing to the excessive cost of transmitting messages. As an evidence of its inutility, I learn from the Department of Trade and Commerce in Ottawa, that less than half a