

1883.

VICTORIA.

POSTAL CONFERENCE, 1883.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE,

HELD IN SYDNEY, IN MAY, 1883.

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS, RESOLUTIONS, PAPERS LAID BEFORE THE CONFERENCE.

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY'S COMMAND.

By Authority:

JOHN FERRES, GOVERNMENT PRINTER, MELBOURNE.

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF THE
POSTAL CONFERENCE.

HELD IN SYDNEY, IN 1883.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, SYDNEY, 3RD MAY, 1883.

The undermentioned gentlemen, representatives of the Colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, were present:—

New South Wales :	The Honorable Alex. Stuart.
	The Honorable F. A. Wright.
Victoria :	The Honorable Graham Berry.
South Australia :	The Honorable J. L. Parsons.
Tasmania :	The Honorable John S. Dodds.

It was mentioned that the Honorable Boyd D. Morehead, representing Queensland, was prevented from attending in consequence of the death of a relative.

The Honorable Alex. Stuart and the Honorable F. A. Wright laid upon the table their commissions.

The Honorable Graham Berry proposed, and the Honorable J. L. Parsons seconded, the appointment of the Honorable Alex. Stuart as Chairman. Carried.

Mr. Alexander C. Budge was appointed Secretary.

The Conference having deliberated upon the desirability or otherwise of the permanent Heads of Departments accompanying the Delegates being present during discussion on the Postal Question, it was resolved in the affirmative, as tending to facilitate the business of the Conference.

The Honorable Graham Berry then laid before the Conference a Memorandum which he had prepared on the subject of the Universal Postal Union, which was ordered to be printed.

Other papers bearing upon the Postal Question were laid before the Council and ordered to be printed.

The Conference then adjourned until to-morrow at ten o'clock a.m.

ALEX. STUART,
Chairman.

ALEX. C. BUDGE, Secretary.

AT THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, SYDNEY, 4TH MAY, 1883.

Present:—

New South Wales :	The Honorable Alex. Stuart.
	The Honorable F. A. Wright.
Victoria :	The Honorable Graham Berry.
South Australia :	The Honorable J. L. Parsons.
Queensland :	The Honorable Boyd D. Morehead.
Tasmania :	The Honorable J. S. Dodds.

The Conference having assembled at ten o'clock, the Minutes of the proceedings of yesterday were read and confirmed.

The Honorable Boyd D. Morehead then laid his commission upon the table.

Mr. Morehead drew attention to the resolution arrived at yesterday, allowing the permanent officials in attendance on the members of the Conference to be present during the discussion of the Postal Question, and expressed his dissent therefrom.

After this expression of opinion by Mr. Morehead the Secretaries withdrew.

A memorandum proposed by Mr. Berry was then read, on the subject of the "Universal Postal Union," and the Conference having at some length discussed the same, its further consideration was postponed on the following motion, proposed by Mr. Dodds and seconded by Mr. Wright:—

"That the official heads of departments accompanying the Delegates be instructed to prepare a report showing the loss to the Postal revenues of the Australian Colonies, New Zealand, and Tasmania, and the amount of the contributions respectively to the mail services known as the Peninsular and Oriental, the San Francisco, and Torres Straits, upon the basis of the alternative proposals contained in the memorandum laid before the Conference by Mr. Berry; also showing the result, calculated upon the basis of population, of the above-named Colonies, and generally such further information as they may think necessary to be laid before the Conference."

The Conference adjourned until Monday the 7th instant, at two o'clock p.m.

ALEX. STUART,
Chairman.

ALEX. C. BUDGE, Secretary.

AT THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, SYDNEY, 7th MAY, 1883.

Present:

New South Wales :	The Honorable Alex. Stuart. The Honorable F. A. Wright.
Victoria :	The Honorable Gruham Berry.
South Australia :	The Honorable J. L. Parsons.
Queensland :	The Honorable Boyd D. Morehead.
Tasmania :	The Honorable J. S. Dodds.

The Conference having assembled at two o'clock p.m., the minutes of the proceedings on the 5th instant were read and confirmed.

Mr. Berry laid on the table his commission.

The Conference then resumed consideration of the subject of the "Postal Union"; and the report of the official heads of departments who accompany the Delegates having been brought up, was discussed at length, and personal explanations obtained from the officials referred to upon several matters affecting the subject.

It was resolved that the report and returns connected therewith should be printed, and placed in the hands of the Delegates without delay, in order that some definite conclusion might be arrived at as early as possible.

Several matters of importance to the Colonies were discussed, and, as bearing upon the subject, notices of motion were given.

Mr. Wright then laid upon the table a report by the Secretary to the Post Office, Sydney, on the subject of the proposed Postal Union, which was ordered to be printed.

Letters from the Melbourne and Sydney Chambers of Commerce respectively, on the subject of Intercolonial Postage and Telegraph rates were also laid on the table, and ordered to be printed.

The following notices of motion for next meeting were then given, and the Conference adjourned at half-past five o'clock, until Wednesday at half-past eleven o'clock a.m.

NOTICES OF MOTION FOR WEDNESDAY THE 9th INSTANT.

Mr. Berry to move—

This Conference having had under its consideration the various despatches from the Imperial Government, and other memoranda and statistics explaining the world federation known as the Universal Postal Union, is of opinion—

- (1.) That the Australasian Colonies should lend their support thereto, by an expression of willingness to enter the said Postal Union.
- (2.) That the conditions suggested in the despatch signed by Mr. Fawcett, as precedent to such entry, be insisted upon.
- (3.) That the loss on all existing contracts and subsidies consequent on the adoption of the lower Union rates of transit other than the net loss on the P. and O. contract, which last year amounted to £15,600, which will in future, as at present, be borne by Victoria alone, be borne by each and all of the Colonies, on the basis of correspondence homeward and outward.
- (4.) That no further or additional postal subsidy be agreed to except by the unanimous approval of all the Colonies.
- (5.) That such further conditions as this Conference may agree to must also be regarded as precedent to entering the said Union.

Mr. Stuart to move—

That in the opinion of this Conference it is desirable—

- (1.) That the Australasian Colonies should become parties to the Postal Union.
- (2.) That it should be a condition thereof that they be admitted to vote.
- (3.) That the voting power to be accorded to these Colonies should not be less than three, inasmuch as three lines of ocean steamers are subsidized by the Colonies.
- (4.) That each Colony continue the management and risk of its own subsidized line, but that any other Colony using such line shall pay to the subsidizing Colony the full amount of the Postal Union rates upon the postal matter transmitted thereby.

Mr. Wright to move—

That the agreement of May, 1878, in regard to the apportionment between the Australasian Colonies of the subsidy to the Port Darwin cable, on the basis of population, shall be taken to include in such calculation the aboriginal inhabitants of the respective colonies.

Mr. Wright to move—

That it is desirable the attention of the Company should be called to the recent interruptions in the cable, which, were the two cables maintained in working order, in terms of the agreement, should, it is thought, not occur.

Mr. Wright to move—

That, as regards Government messages transmitted over the Port Darwin cable, the term "Government messages," in accordance with the cable agreement of May, 1879, shall apply to "messages sent from or to Her Majesty, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, or any Government department in the United Kingdom, or the respective Agent-General for the Colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, or any other Australasian Colony or Colonies as to which it shall be notified as hereinafter mentioned, on the one hand, and the Governors, or Chief or Colonial Secretaries, of, or any Government department of, the various Colonial Governments, on the other, or any of them, on matters relating to the administration of the Governments." It being understood from the above clause that messages sent from or to any department of the Public Service in Great Britain or the Colonies be considered "Government messages," and entitled to be transmitted at the reduced rates.

Mr. Wright to move—

That, as regards telegrams passing between the Australasian Colonies and New Zealand, fifteen letters shall be allowed as the maximum length of each word, instead of ten letters as proposed by the Cable Company.

Mr. Parsons to move—

That, in the opinion of this Conference, it is desirable that uniform packet and parcel postal rates and regulations should be adopted by all the Australasian Colonies, and that Messrs. Todd, C.M.G., Lambton, Jackson, and Facker be requested to submit draft regulations.

Mr. Parsons to move—

That the Indian and Indo-European Telegraph Departments, The Eastern Telegraph Company, and the Indo-European Telegraph Company, be requested to reduce their rates on press telegrams to and from Australia.

Mr. Parsons to move—

That, in the opinion of this Conference, it is desirable that the system of Postal Notes should be introduced, and have currency throughout the Australasian Colonies.

ALEX. STUART,
Chairman.

ALEX. C. BUDGE, Secretary.

AT THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, SYDNEY, 9TH MAY, 1883.

Present:

New South Wales :	The Honorable Alexander Stuart.
	The Honorable F. A. Wright.
Victoria :	The Honorable Graham Berry.
South Australia :	The Honorable J. L. Parsons.
Queensland :	The Honorable Boyd D. Morehead.
Tasmania :	The Honorable J. S. Dodds.

The Conference having assembled at half-past eleven o'clock, the Minutes of the proceedings on the 8th instant were read and confirmed.

The Honorable J. L. Parsons laid his commission on the table.

The Conference then proceeded to the consideration of the motions on the subject of "Postal Union," of which notice was given yesterday by Messrs. Berry and Stuart, and after mature deliberation a draft series of resolutions were framed for final consideration at the next meeting.

Draft regulations referred to :—

That this Conference, having had under its consideration the various despatches from the Imperial Government and other memoranda and statistics respecting the Universal Postal Union, is of opinion—

1. That the Australasian Colonies should apply for admission to the said Postal Union.
2. That the stipulation suggested by the Postmaster-General of England, in the despatch dated 6th November 1882, as precedent to such entry be insisted upon.
3. That each of the Australasian Colonies, parties to this agreement, be accorded a separate voice in the affairs of the Union.
4. That each Colony continue the management and responsibility of its existing subsidized line, but that any other colony using such line shall pay to the subsidizing Colony the full amount of the Postal Union rates upon the postal matter transmitted thereby.
5. That if on annual investigation it be shown that, by adopting Postal Union rates, any such subsidizing Colony incurs a greater loss than it at present incurs (subject in the case of New South Wales and New Zealand, to modification consequent upon the reduced Pacific Mail contract now being entered into), an adjustment shall be made of such excess loss whereby it shall be borne by the Colonies respectively using such line, in proportion to the postal matter carried.
6. That no further postal subsidy be subject to this agreement except by the unanimous approval of the Colonies assenting hereto.

Mr. Wright then moved—

"That the agreement of May, 1878, in regard to the apportionment between the Australasian Colonies of the subsidy to the Port Darwin cable, on the basis of population, shall be taken to include in such calculation the aboriginal inhabitants of the respective Colonies,"

which was carried upon the following division :—

For.

New South Wales,
Victoria.

Against.

South Australia.

Queensland and Tasmania did not vote.

Mr. Wright also moved—

"That it is desirable the attention of the company should be called to the recent interruptions in the cable, which, were the two cables maintained in working order, in terms of the agreement, should, it is thought, not occur."

and, after discussion, the following amended motion was agreed to :—

"That it is desirable the attention of the Cable Company should be called to their failure to carry out the contract, and to the recent interruptions in the cable, which, were the two cables maintained in working order, in terms of the agreement, would not occur, and that they be required to intimate at what time that portion of the agreement relating to the maintaining of the two cables will be carried into effect."

Mr. Wright further moved—

"That, as regards Government messages transmitted over the Port Darwin Cable, the term 'Government messages,' in accordance with the cable agreement of May 1879, shall apply to 'messages sent from or to Her Majesty, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, or any Government Department in the United Kingdom, or the respective Agent-General for the Colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, or any other Australasian Colony or Colonies as to which it shall be notified as hereinbefore mentioned, on the one hand, and the Governors or Chief Colonial Secretaries of, or any Government department of, the various Colonial Governments on the other, or any of them, on matters relating to the administration of the Governments.' It being understood from the above clause that messages sent from or to any department of the Public Service in Great Britain or the Colonies be considered 'Government messages,' and entitled to be transmitted at the reduced rates."

which was agreed to after discussion.

Mr. Parsons moved—

"That, in the opinion of this Conference, it is desirable that uniform packet and parcel postal rates and regulations should be adopted by all the Australasian Colonies, and that Messrs. Todd, C.M.G., Lambton, Jackson, and Packer, be requested to submit draft regulations."

The motion was agreed to.

A telegram was received during the day from Mr. Dick, Postmaster-General of New Zealand, expressing regret at his inability to attend the Conference.

The Conference then adjourned at five o'clock, until to-morrow at three o'clock p.m.

ALEX. STUART,
Chairman.

ALEX. C. BUDGE, Secretary.

AT THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, SYDNEY, 10th MAY, 1883.

Present:

New South Wales :	The Honorable Alex. Stuart.
	The Honorable F. A. Wright.
Victoria :	The Honorable Graham Berry.
South Australia :	The Honorable J. L. Parsons.
Queensland :	The Honorable Boyd D. Morehead.
Tasmania :	The Honorable J. S. Dodds.

The Conference having assembled at three o'clock p.m., the Minutes of the proceedings of yesterday were read and confirmed.

The Conference then proceeded to the further consideration of the draft resolutions on the subject of "Postal Union," when the following were submitted for final approval, by the Chairman:—

That this Conference, having had under its consideration the various despatches from the Imperial Government and other memoranda and statistics respecting the Universal Postal Union, is of opinion—

1. That the Australasian Colonies should apply for admission to the said Postal Union.
2. That the stipulations suggested by the Postmaster-General of England, in the despatch dated 6 November, 1882, as precedent to such entry, be insisted upon.
3. That each of the Australasian Colonies, parties to this agreement, be accorded a separate voice in the affairs of the Union.
4. That each Colony continue the management and responsibility of its existing subsidized line, but that any other Colony using such line shall pay to the subsidizing Colony the full amount of the postage upon all postal matter despatched from such Colony; the subsidizing Colony paying all transit rates on homeward mails, and receiving the proportion of Union transit rates due on outward mails, and any contribution from England in respect of the postal matter carried by each line.
5. That if on annual investigation it be shown that, by adopting Postal Union rates, any such subsidizing Colony incurs a greater loss than it at present incurs (subject in the case of New South Wales and New Zealand, to modification consequent upon the reduced Pacific Mail contract now being entered into), an adjustment shall be made of such excess loss whereby it shall be borne by the subsidizing Colony and the other Colonies using such line, in proportion to the postal matter carried.
6. That no future postal subsidy shall be subject to this agreement except by the unanimous approval of the Colonies assenting thereto.

Mr. Morehead thereupon proposed the following amendment:—

"That this Conference is of opinion that the cost of the existing subsidized Colonial Mail Services and the proposed 'Orient' service should be met by contributions from the Colonies making use of such services, and that the proportionate amount of such contributions be based upon the population of each Colony."

The motion, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question," was put from the Chair, and resulted in the following division:—

Ayes.
New South Wales,
Victoria,
South Australia,
Tasmania.

No.
Queensland.

The Question that the resolutions, as submitted, be approved, was carried on the following division:—

Ayes.	No.
New South Wales,	Queensland.
Victoria,	
South Australia,	
Tasmania.	

Mr. Wright then moved—

“That, as regards telegrams passing between the Australasian Colonies and New Zealand, fifteen letters shall be allowed as the maximum length of each word, instead of ten letters as proposed by the Cable Company.”

which, after discussion, was agreed to.

Mr. Wright laid before the Conference a copy of the Paris Postal Union Convention, which was ordered to be printed and appended to the papers.

The Conference then adjourned until to-morrow at half-past two o'clock.

ALEX. STUART,

Chairman.

ALEX. C. BUDGE, Secretary.

AT THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, SYDNEY, 11TH MAY, 1883.

Present:

New South Wales :	The Honorable Alex. Stuart.
	The Honorable F. A. Wright.
Victoria :	The Honorable Graham Berry.
South Australia :	The Honorable J. L. Parsons.
Queensland :	The Honorable Boyd D. Morehead.
Tasmania :	The Honorable J. S. Dodds.

The Conference having assembled at half-past two o'clock, the Minutes of the proceedings of yesterday were read and confirmed.

Mr. Parsons then moved an amendment in the motion of which he had given notice, on the subject of reduced rates for Press Messages by Cable; and the same having been put from the Chair, the following resolution was unanimously agreed to:—

“That South Australia having intimated her willingness to reduce the charge on Press Telegrams for transmission by Cable by 25 per cent., this Conference is of opinion that the Indian and Indo-European Telegraph Departments, the Eastern Telegraph Company, and the Indo-European Telegraph Company should be requested to make a similar reduction.”

Mr. Parsons also moved the motion of which notice had been given, on the subject of adopting a system of Postal Notes, and the same having been amended, the following Resolution was agreed to:—

“That, in the opinion of this Conference, it is desirable that a system of Postal Notes not exceeding 10s. in value should be introduced, and have currency throughout the Australasian Colonies; and that the South Australian Government be requested to prepare a Draft Bill on the subject.”

Mr. Stuart laid before the Conference a communication from several of the leading Steam Companies and others, urging the establishment of a “Federal Quarantine,” and after mature deliberation, the Conference agreed to the following Resolution:—

“That, in the opinion of this Conference, it is desirable that such Quarantine Station, should, if practicable, be established.”

The subject of reduced Intercolonial Telegraph Rates was then discussed, and the Colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania agreed to the following, viz:—

	s. d.
A message of ten words transmitted over the land lines of two Colonies	1 0
For each additional word ...	0 2
A message of ten words transmitted by the land lines of three Colonies	1 6
For each additional word ...	0 3

To be divided in equal shares between the Colonies performing the service.

Submarine cable charges additional in all cases where the cable is used.

The Conference then proceeded to consider a proposed new clause in the “Postal Union” Resolutions, affecting the carriage of postal matter by the Orient Steam Company, when the following Resolution was arrived at:—

“In the event of New South Wales concluding a contract with the Orient Company, it shall be at the risk of that Colony only; but any other Colony transmitting postal matter thereby shall pay the said Company a rate not less than 10s. per pound on letters, and 6d. per pound on newspapers and packets transmitted homeward thereby.”

The Conference adjourned at a quarter to six o'clock, until to-morrow at ten o'clock.

ALEX. STUART,

Chairman.

ALEX. C. BUDGE, Secretary.

AT THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, SYDNEY, 12TH MAY, 1883.

Present :

New South Wales : The Honorable Alex. Stuart.
 The Honorable F. A. Wright.
 Victoria : The Honorable Graham Berry.
 South Australia : The Honorable J. L. Parsons.
 Tasmania : The Honorable J. S. Dodds.

The Conference having met at ten o'clock, the Minutes of the proceedings of yesterday were read and confirmed.

The following Resolutions with respect to the concurrence of New Zealand and Western Australia in the Postal Union Regulations were agreed to, viz. :—

- " That the Chairman communicate the Resolutions affecting Postal Union to New Zealand and Western Australia by telegram, and urge their acceptance thereof."
- " That in the event of New Zealand refusing to accept the Resolutions, they shall remain valid on the part of the Colonies which have agreed thereto, unless the Imperial Government be unable to remove difficulties of carrying out the arrangement for the Pacific Service on a dual system without placing New South Wales in a worse position."

Copy of Telegram.

" The Conference, except Queensland, has agreed to following resolutions, and urges your acquiescence in them if possible by Tuesday morning, when final sitting held.

" Resolutions on other subjects shall be forwarded by post."

The Conference then discussed a number of matters affecting the Colonies upon which information was considered desirable, but the subjects were not of such a character as to require action by the Conference.

The Conference adjourned until Tuesday, the 15th instant, at ten o'clock.

ALEX. STUART,
 Chairman.

ALEX. C. BUDGE, Secretary.

AT THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, SYDNEY, 15TH MAY, 1883.

Present :

New South Wales : The Honorable Alex. Stuart.
 The Honorable F. A. Wright.
 Victoria : The Honorable Graham Berry.
 South Australia : The Honorable J. L. Parsons.
 Tasmania : The Honorable J. S. Dodds.

The Conference having assembled at ten o'clock, the Minutes of the proceedings of the 12th instant were read and confirmed.

Mr. Stuart laid before the Conference telegrams from the Governments of New Zealand and Western Australia on the subject of the Postal Union Regulations, which were ordered to be printed.

The report of Messrs. Todd, Lambton, Jackson, and Packer on the subject of Packet Regulations was then brought up and ordered to be printed.

The Conference having had their attention drawn to the subject of Patent Laws, agreed to the following resolution :—

- " That this Conference considers it desirable that such a law should obtain throughout the colonies, and requests the Chairman to communicate with the various Colonies with a view to some uniform mode of action being devised."

The report of Dr. Mackellar, Health Officer, Sydney, on the subject of a Federal Quarantine, was ordered to be printed.

Papers relating to child-desertion were laid before the Conference by Mr. Berry, and ordered to be printed.

Mr. Stuart informed the Conference that he had a communication from New Zealand on the subject of child-desertion; and Mr. Parsons stated that the subject had engaged the attention of the South Australian Government.

The Conference then considered a number of matters affecting the Australasian Colonies, and expressed regret that the time at their disposal would not admit of that consideration which their importance demands.

The Conference then adjourned.

ALEX. STUART,
 Chairman.

ALEX. C. BUDGE, Secretary.

ALEX. STUART,	} New South Wales.
F. A. WRIGHT,	
GRAHAM BERRY,	
J. L. PARSONS,	
JOHN S. DODDS,	Tasmania.
	Victoria.
	South Australia.

POSTAL CONFERENCE, 1883.

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE RESOLUTIONS TO WHICH THE CONFERENCE AGREED.

Postal Union.

That this Conference, having had under its consideration the various despatches from the Imperial Government and other memoranda and statistics respecting the Universal Postal Union, is of opinion,—

1. That the Australasian Colonies should apply for admission to the said Postal Union.
2. That the stipulations suggested by the Postmaster-General of England, in the despatch dated 6 November, 1882, as precedent to such entry, be insisted upon.
3. That each of the Australasian Colonies, parties to this agreement, be accorded a separate voice in the affairs of the Union.
4. That each Colony continue the management and responsibility of its existing subsidized line, but that any other Colony using such line shall pay to the subsidizing Colony the full amount of the postage upon all postal matter despatched from such Colony; the subsidizing Colony paying all transit rates on homeward mails, and receiving the proportion of Union transit rates due on outward mails, and any contribution from England in respect of the postal matter carried by each line.
5. That if on annual investigation it be shown that, by adopting Postal Union rates, any such subsidizing Colony incurs a greater loss than it at present incurs (subject, in the case of New South Wales and New Zealand, to modification consequent upon the reduced Pacific Mail contract now being entered into), an adjustment shall be made of such excess loss whereby it shall be borne by the subsidizing Colony and the other Colonies using such line, in proportion to the postal matter carried.
6. In the event of New South Wales concluding a contract with the Orient Company, it shall be at the risk of that Colony only; but any other Colony transmitting postal matter thereby shall pay the said Company a rate not less than 10s. a pound on letters and 6d. per pound on newspapers and packets transmitted homeward thereby.
7. That no future postal subsidy shall be subject to this agreement except by the unanimous approval of the Colonies assenting hereto.

Cable Subsidy.—Population Basis.

That the agreement of May, 1878, in regard to the apportionment between the Australasian Colonies of the subsidy to the Port Darwin cable, on the basis of *population*, shall be taken to include in such calculation the aboriginal inhabitants of the respective Colonies.

Cable Interruption.

That it is desirable the attention of the Cable Company should be called to their failure to carry out the Contract, and to the recent interruptions in the cable, which, were the two cables maintained in working order, in terms of the agreement, would not occur, and that they be required to intimate at what time that portion of the agreement relating to the maintaining of two cables will be carried into effect.

Government Messages over Port Darwin Cable.

That, as regards Government messages transmitted over the Port Darwin Cable, the term "Government messages," in accordance with the cable agreement of May, 1879, shall apply to "messages sent from or to Her Majesty, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, or any Government Department in the United Kingdom, or the respective Agent-General for the Colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, or any other Australasian Colony or Colonies as to which it shall be notified as hereinbefore mentioned, on the one hand, and the Governors, or Chief or Colonial Secretaries, of, or any Government Department of, the various Colonial Governments on the other, or any of them, on matters relating to the administration of the Governments." It being understood from the above clause that messages sent from or to any Department of the Public Service in Great Britain or the Colonies be considered "Government messages," and entitled to be transmitted at the reduced rates.

Uniform Packet and Parcel Postal Rates.

That, in the opinion of this conference, it is desirable that uniform packet and parcel postal rates and regulations should be adopted by all the Australasian Colonies, and that Messrs. Todd, C.M.G., Lambton, Jackson, and Packer, be requested to submit draft regulations.

New Zealand Cable.—Number of letters in a word.

That, as regards telegrams passing between the Australasian Colonies and New Zealand, fifteen letters shall be allowed as the maximum length of each word, instead of ten letters as proposed by the Cable Company.

Reduction of Charges in Press Telegrams by Cable.

That South Australia having intimated her willingness to reduce the charge on Press Telegrams for transmission by Cable by 25 per cent., this Conference is of opinion that the Indian and Indo-European Telegraph Departments, the Eastern Telegraph Company, and the Indo-European Telegraph Company should be requested to make a similar reduction.

Postal Notes.

That, in the opinion of this Conference, it is desirable that a system of Postal Notes not exceeding 10s. in value should be introduced, and have currency throughout the Australasian Colonies; and that the South Australian Government be requested to prepare a Draft Bill on the subject.

"Federal Quarantine."

That, having had under consideration a communication from some of the leading Steam Companies and others, on the subject of "Federal Quarantine," the Conference agreed to the following resolution:—

That, in the opinion of this Conference, it is desirable that such Quarantine Station should, if practicable, be established.

Intercolonial Telegraph Rates.

The Conference having considered the subject of reduction of Intercolonial Telegraph Rates, the Colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania agree to the following:—

	s. d. and f.
A message of ten words transmitted over the land lines of two Colonies	1 0
For each additional word	0 2 f. 1
A message of ten words transmitted by the land lines of three Colonies	1 6 f. 1
For each additional word	0 3 f.

To be divided in equal shares between the Colonies performing the service.

Submarine cable charges additional in all cases where the cable is used.

Telegram to New Zealand and Western Australia.

That the Chairman communicate the resolutions affecting Postal Union to New Zealand and Western Australia by telegram, and urge their acceptance thereof.

That in the event of New Zealand refusing to accept the resolutions, they shall remain valid on the part of the Colonies which have agreed thereto, unless the Imperial Government be unable to remove difficulties of carrying out the arrangement for the Pacific Service on a dual system without placing New South Wales in a worse position.

Copy of Telegram.

"The Conference, except Queensland, has agreed to following resolutions, and urges your acquiescence in them if possible by Tuesday morning, when final sitting held.

"Resolutions on other subjects shall be forwarded by post."

Patent Laws.

The Conference having had under consideration the question of an Intercolonial Patent Law to facilitate the securing of Patent rights and to lessen their cost, agreed to the following resolution:—

That this Conference considers it desirable that such a law should obtain throughout the Colonies; and requests the Chairman to communicate with the various Colonies with a view to some uniform mode of action being devised.

ALEX. STUART,

F. A. WRIGHT,

GRAHAM BERRY,

J. LANGDON PARSONS,

J. S. DODDS,

} New South Wales.

Victoria.

South Australia.

Tasmania.

POSTAL CONFERENCE, 1883.

(Held in Sydney, May, 1883.)

PAPERS LAID BEFORE THE CONFERENCE.

1. Memorandum by the Honorable Graham Berry on Postal Union.
2. Despatches, &c., on the subject of "Postal Union."
3. Report by Permanent Officials accompanying the Delegates, on the subject of Postal Union.
4. Report by Secretary, Post Office Department, Sydney.
5. Letters from Chambers of Commerce of New South Wales and Victoria, on the subject of Postal and Telegraphic Rates.
6. Letter from Steam Companies and others, Sydney, urging the establishment of a Federal Quarantine.
7. Paris Postal Union Convention.
8. Telegrams from Governments of New Zealand and Western Australia, on the subject of the Postal Union Regulations.
9. Report of Messrs. Todd, Lambton, Jackson, and Packer, on the subject of Packet Regulations.
10. Report of Dr. Mackellar, on the subject of Quarantine.
11. Papers relating to child-desertion and absconding parents.

POSTAL CONFERENCE, 1883.**PAPERS LAID BEFORE THE CONFERENCE.**

Memorandum by the Honorable Graham Berry, Postmaster-General of Victoria.

THE Universal Postal Union has progressed year by year until nearly the whole civilised world is within its operations, the Australasian Colonies, the Cape of Good Hope, and Natal being the only important commercial people who still hold aloof. These exceptions will soon be reduced by the contemplated entrance of the Cape and Natal into the Union. Under the circumstances it is desirable, by a comprehensive consideration of the subject, to ascertain if the time has not arrived when steps should be taken to settle the terms upon which these Colonies can become an integral portion of this great postal confederation. For the purpose, therefore, of investigating the question, it may be advantageous to set forth, as succinctly as possible, the objects for which the Postal Union Convention appears to have been formulated, and the benefits sought to be secured.

I. It is designed to stimulate social and commercial intercourse, and the establishment of closer relations and common interests between individuals of different nationalities, and in this respect it may be designated as beneficent and cosmopolitan in its character.

II. With a view to facilitate and promote this intercourse, it proposes not only that the best and most rapid means of conveyance shall be employed, but that the cost of such conveyance shall be reduced to the lowest possible limits, and that the postal charges on the correspondence shall be proportionately low, both transit rates and postal charges being subject to reduction from time to time, as circumstances may seem to demand.

III. It aims at establishing a common agreement between all nations in a matter of universal interest, which will form a not unimportant addition to International law, and can scarcely fail to secure many advantages to all civilized communities.

IV. It provides for the adoption, as far as practicable, of uniform rates and practice in dealing with correspondence, the consequent removal of anomalies in postal charges, and the prevention of inconveniences resulting from complicated regulations giving rise to complaints on the part of the public and trouble to the Post Offices.

V. It arranges not only for the interchange of letters at low rates, and of packets of all kinds, including patterns and samples of merchandise, but also of books and newspapers, thus encouraging the wide dissemination of knowledge, the influence of which it is hardly possible to over-estimate.

VI. It is capable of great development, and, in connection therewith, arrangements have already been made between many countries of the Union for exchange of International money orders, the transmission of articles of declared value, and the establishment of the Parcel Post system.

VII. It is almost needless to call attention to the fact that, for many years past, the general tendency of postal reforms throughout the world has been in the direction of those proposed by the Postal Union Treaty, which provides for the extension to all nations of principles previously having only a very limited operation.

With reference to the proposal that the Colonies should join the Union, difficulties have been suggested and objections raised, but upon careful examination they would scarcely appear to be insurmountable or of such weight as to justify an adverse decision being arrived at.

1. It has been urged that by far the largest portion of the foreign correspondence is with the United Kingdom, and as the Colonies can make any arrangements they desire with the Home Government, there is not sufficient inducement for them to enter the Postal Union, in order to improve their postal relations with other countries, which are comparatively limited in extent.

With respect to this, it may be pointed out that it has not hitherto been found practicable to secure uniformity of rates and practice in these Colonies in regard to correspondence for the United Kingdom, and there seems little probability of obtaining it except by their entering the Union, and further that, by taking the proposed step, their right to make special agreements with the Imperial Government respecting the postages collected would not necessarily be interfered with.

It should also be borne in mind, in connection with correspondence for other countries, that the commercial relations of the colonies with many places are of very recent growth, but they are capable of great expansion, and a postal reform, which could be obtained at small cost, would be an important factor in assisting their extension.

At the same time it must be remembered that all other countries have either joined, or are about to join, the Postal Union, and the Australian Colonies would occupy an invidious position should they determine to remain excluded from it, and this circumstance would doubtless tend to injure their prestige in the eyes of other communities.

2. It has been stated that the interests of the several Colonies are so conflicting as to present an insuperable obstacle to a reciprocal arrangement for maintenance of the sea services.

The difficulties, however, appear to have been greatly over-estimated. Ever since the Colonies have established mail lines of their own, each Colony which is not a party to the contracts has, in an indirect manner, by the payment of transit charges, assisted in maintaining them, the largest measure of support having been accorded to the Ceylon service, which has proved to be the most useful and beneficial of the existing lines, and it is proposed that this support shall be continued in such a way that the loss consequent upon reduction of the postage shall be borne in equitable proportions by the Colonies concerned.

For this purpose the following alternative plans are suggested:—

A.—Contribution towards the net loss under the contracts, according to the extent of correspondence conveyed.

B.—Payment of fixed transit rates as at present.

A.—According to the first scheme the Colonies would pay, at Union rates, all the charges for transit of homeward mails, and, in addition, contribute towards the net loss under the contracts in proportion to the extent of correspondence conveyed thereby.

For the computation of the respective contributions, the letter portion of the mails may be taken as representing with sufficient exactness the extent of the correspondence.

Taking as a basis the correspondence *via* Ceylon during 1882, it appears that Victoria sent and received about one-half of the letters, and would therefore bear about half the loss on the contract with the Peninsular and Oriental Company, the other Colonies defraying the remaining moiety. It has been calculated that the loss would be about £52,000 per annum, after deducting the value of the postages collected, and the receipts from all sources, including the amount of profit to the Imperial revenue which the Home Government proposes to pay over to Victoria.

On the basis referred to, the contributions would be—

Victoria	...	...	...	...	...	£26,000 per annum.
Other Colonies	...	...	...	...	...	£26,000

The net loss to other Colonies would, however, be less than the amount mentioned, as they would retain portion of the postage collected on the homeward mails after payment of the transit charges; and in the

following statement will be found the estimated contribution to be paid by each of them, the postage retained, and the net loss :—

	Contribution.	Postage retained.	Net Loss.
New South Wales	£9,735	£1,550	£8,185
South Australia	7,235	820	6,415
New Zealand	4,200	230*	3,970
Tasmania	2,080	180*	1,900
Queensland	1,375	130*	1,245
Western Australia	1,375	260	1,115

In considering, however, the matter of loss, it should not be overlooked that the public would benefit by the reduction of the postal charges, and taking, as before, the correspondence during 1882, the gain to persons sending letters, it is estimated would be—

Victoria	...	...	...	...	...	£3,000
New South Wales	...	...	...	...	...	3,250
South Australia	...	...	...	...	...	600
New Zealand	...	...	...	...	...	770
Tasmania	...	...	...	...	...	660
Queensland	...	...	...	...	...	580
Western Australia	...	...	...	...	...	170

The reduction in New South Wales, New Zealand, and Tasmania would be 3d. per letter and 1d. per paper; in Queensland, 4d. per letter, and 1d. per paper; and in Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia, 1d. per letter.

Upon the establishment of uniform rates it is probable that an increased extent of correspondence would be sent via Ceylon by other Colonies, and the amounts to be contributed would be larger in proportion; but, under any circumstances, the largest share of the loss (say not less than two-fifths) would be paid by Victoria.

In regard to other contract services, contributions on the same basis would be paid to the Colonies maintaining them.

B.—For payment of transit rates, the following plan appears to be the simplest and most equitable :—

Non-contracting Colonies to pay the contracting colony fixed transit rates (say 5d. per letter, or equivalent bulk rate, and 6d. per lb. of other articles) on both homeward and outward mails, the contracting Colony also receiving the proportion of sea rate for all outward mails carried by its service.

In consideration for these payments, the contracting colony to convey mails to and from Ceylon, San Francisco, or Singapore, as the case may be, and to pay all the charges for conveyance to destination of the homeward correspondence carried by the service under its control.

So far as the Ceylon Service is concerned, the net loss to Victoria under the contract by this arrangement is estimated at £23,000 per annum, taking the returns for 1882 as the basis of the calculation.

The net loss to Colonies accounting for transit rates to Victoria would be the amounts paid for conveyance of outward mails, and the gross cost and net loss to each Colony would be as follows :—

	Gross Cost.	Net Loss.
Victoria	£41,000	£23,000
New South Wales	18,855	8,210
South Australia	10,988	7,650
New Zealand	6,705	5,400
Tasmania	8,825	2,200
Queensland	2,025	1,330
Western Australia	2,138	1,240

The saving to the public in consequence of reduction of the postage would be as before mentioned.

A large extent of correspondence would doubtless be sent via Ceylon upon establishment of reduced and uniform rates, but it is computed that under this scheme, as under the first plan suggested, Victoria would bear not less than two-fifths of the loss upon the contract.

If, however, contrary to expectation, it should be found that the increase of correspondence, and consequently in the amounts paid for carriage of mails, had become so large as to unduly decrease the Victorian share of the loss, the transit rates would be revised with a view to their reduction.

3. The circumstance mentioned in the circular dispatch of the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated 13th December, 1882, may perhaps be assumed to constitute another objection. Lord Kimberley having brought under notice that the German Post Office has announced its intention to propose, at the Lisbon Postal Congress, to be held in 1884, a very considerable reduction in the rates for sea carriage and in the postal charges.

At the same time, however, he points out that the Australian Colonies, in order to avoid incurring a very heavy loss at the outset, could make their entry into the Union conditional upon the present rates being maintained, at least until after the next quinquennial Congress to that of 1884, by which time the conditions of maintenance of Australian mail services may undergo important modifications.

It is desirable, therefore, that the Colonies entering the Union should do so expressly coupled with the two stipulations suggested in the despatch, viz. :—

- (1.) That the rates of payment for sea transit and the surtaxes fixed by the convention of Paris shall not be reduced, at all events until after the next quinquennial Congress to that of Lisbon.
- (2.) That the Australian Colonies shall be directly and adequately represented at future Congresses.

This would admit of their rendering material assistance to the Imperial Government, in opposing radical changes likely to cause undue loss to the Imperial and colonial revenue.

In any case the colonies would have the power to withdraw from the Union, upon giving twelve months' notice, should they disapprove of any action proposed to be taken which they might regard as seriously detrimental to their interests.

Adverting further to the financial aspect of the case and the money loss which would be involved, attention should be specially directed to the fact that reduced postage leads to increased intercourse, and that, if the revenue should suffer to a slight extent, proportionate advantages would be secured to individuals, and especially to those who by their energy and enterprise are the most influential in developing the resources of the country and promoting its welfare.

In conclusion it may be safely asserted that public opinion, as expressed by Chambers of Commerce in the chief Australian cities, and the Press of the Colonies generally, is strongly favourable to united action being taken in this matter without delay, and it would therefore be impolitic to defer any longer a settlement of the question.

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