

(No. 23.)



1897.

SESSION II.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

POSTAL AND TELEGRAPHIC CONFERENCE, 1896:

Report of the Delegates to the Intercolonial Conference held at the
General Post Office, Sydney, in November, 1896.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.

1897.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.
NEW SOUTH WALES.

POSTAL AND TELEGRAPHIC CONFERENCE,
1896.

REPORT OF THE DELEGATES
TO THE
INTERCOLONIAL CONFERENCE,

HELD AT THE GENERAL POST OFFICE, SYDNEY,

IN NOVEMBER, 1896.

Printed under No. 2 Report from Printing Committee, 6 May, 1897.



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1897.

POSTAL AND TELEGRAPHIC CONFERENCE, 1896.

Report of the Delegates to the Intercolonial Conference,

HELD AT THE GENERAL POST OFFICE, SYDNEY,
IN NOVEMBER, 1896.

President :—The Honorable Joseph Cook, M.P., Postmaster-General of New South Wales.

All the Colonies of Australasia were represented except New Zealand.

The Conference opened its session on Saturday, the 14th, and concluded its business on the 19th November, 1896 :—

The Conference was mainly convened for the purpose of considering two matters, viz. :—

1. The business connected with the tenders for the Federal Mail Service, copies of which tenders had been forwarded to the Governments of the respective Australian Colonies by the Imperial Government.
2. The question of representation at the Universal Postal Union Congress to be held at Washington in May, 1897.

But it was determined to take advantage of the meeting for the consideration of other matters deemed to be of sufficient Intercolonial urgency and importance.

The result of the deliberation of the Conference is shown by the following proceedings and resolutions, viz. :—

FEDERAL MAIL SERVICE.

In regard to this matter it was decided to despatch the following cablegram to the Right Honorable the Postmaster-General, London, viz. :—

FEDERAL MAIL TENDERS.—In view of your cables on the subject, and our desire to secure continuance of Federal Mail Service, there appears no alternative but to consent acceptance tender P. & O. as well as Orient Company, as suggested by Imperial Government. Conference in consenting urges negotiations to secure following modifications :—

1. Term of contracts—five years.
2. Duration of voyage—672 hours for both Companies between Naples, Brindisi, and Adelaide.
3. Time of departure from Adelaide—Saturday, 2.30 p.m.
4. Steamers to enter Princess Royal Harbour, Albany, until Freemantle Harbour approved by Admiralty Surveyors, after which steamers to enter latter harbour.

JOSEPH COOK,
President of Intercolonial Conference,
Sydney, 19/11/96.

PROPOSED UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION CONGRESS AT WASHINGTON IN MAY, 1897.

It was resolved as follows :—“That a Minister controlling an Australasian Post Office—accompanied by Mr. James Smibert, Deputy Postmaster-General of Victoria, as postal expert—attend the Washington Congress as Representative of Australasia”; and in regard to the Report of the Permanent Heads as to certain of the subjects that are likely to be discussed at the Congress in question, the following resolution was arrived at, viz. : “That the Report be adopted, subject to such addition and amendments as may be forwarded by the Colonies previous to the departure of the Australasian Delegate for Washington.” The

The Conference concurred in the Report submitted (after revision at the request of the Conference) by the Permanent Heads on certain matters of Inter-colonial urgency and importance, which will be found detailed in the annexed Report of the Proceedings. In two matters, viz.:—The proposed exclusion of Articles of Merchandise, other than samples, from transmission by packet post; and the intention to levy certain charges on Intercolonial newspapers forwarded to Queensland, the Government of that Colony (through the Honorable A. J. Thynne) has been asked to reconsider its determination.

Appended to this Report will be found:—

Minutes of Proceedings of the Conference.

Transcript of notes of the Proceedings by the Shorthand-writer.

Signed on behalf of New South Wales,

JOSEPH COOK.

Signed on behalf of Victoria and Tasmania,

JOHN GAVAN DUFFY.

Signed on behalf of South Australia,

JOHN A. COCKBURN.

Signed on behalf of Queensland,

A. J. THYNNE.

Signed on behalf of West Australia,

E. H. WITTENOOM.

Sydney, 20th November, 1896.

POSTAL AND TELEGRAPHIC CONFERENCE.

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

SATURDAY, 14 NOVEMBER, 1896.

THE Conference was opened at the General Post Office, Sydney, at 10.15 a.m., when the undermentioned gentlemen, representing the Colonies, were present, viz. :—

Queensland : { Hon. A. J. THYNNE, M.L.C., Postmaster-General, Queensland.
 { JOHN McDONNELL, Esq., Under Secretary and Superintendent of Telegraphs.
South Australia : { Hon. J. A. COCKBURN, M.D. (Lond.), M.P., Minister for Education and Agriculture,
 South Australia.
 { Sir CHARLES TODD, K.C.M.G., Postmaster-General, South Australia.
Victoria : { Hon. J. GAVAN DUFFY, M.P., Postmaster-General, Victoria.
Tasmania : {
New South Wales : { Hon. JOSEPH COOK, M.P., Postmaster-General, New South Wales.
 { S. H. LAMBTON, Esq., J.P., Deputy Postmaster-General, New South Wales.
Western Australia : Hon. E. H. WITTENOOM, M.L.C., Minister for Mines, West Australia.

Moved by the Hon. J. GAVAN DUFFY, and seconded by the Hon. Dr. COCKBURN,—“That the Hon. Joseph Cook, M.P., be President of this Conference.” Carried.

Moved by the Hon. Mr. DUFFY, M.P., and seconded by the Hon. Mr. THYNNE,—“That Mr. James Dalgarno perform the duties of Secretary to this Conference.” Carried.

It was determined, without formal motion, that the Conference being of a confidential character, it was not expedient that the Press should be present, at all events so far as the Federal Mail Service is concerned.

The Hon. Mr. Cook laid before the Conference the following telegram, dated 6th November, 1896, that had been received from the Hon. the Premier of New Zealand, viz. :—

“Postal Conference. As general elections take place beginning of next month, exceedingly regret it will not be possible for any Minister to attend. - I note that only Federal Mail Service tenders and Washington Congress representation and subjects will be dealt with, and I presume that another conference for general business will be held about usual time next year. I have not formed any definite opinion *re* Washington representation, but think that one representative, or perhaps two, should suffice. I shall be pleased to learn your own views, and what proposals likely to be made by other Colonies. Subjects for consideration by Washington Congress have already been discussed with your office, but I will send full list by post. Regret my absence from Wellington prevented my replying earlier.

R. J. SEDDON, Postmaster-General.”

The following telegram, dated 11th November, 1896, from the Hon. Sir P. O. Fysh, K.C.M.G., Treasurer and Postmaster-General, Tasmania, was also read :—

“Regret that continued sitting of Parliament and irregularity of steamer sailings both prevent my being present on Saturday.”

The Hon. J. GAVAN DUFFY intimated that he had been requested by the Tasmanian Government to act as the representative for that Colony.

The PRESIDENT delivered his opening address, thanking the Conference for his election, and indicating that in following out the intention when summoning the Conference the business would consist—

- (1) Of the matter of the Federal Mail Service.
- (2) Of the question of representation at the Universal Postal Union Congress at Washington.

A letter from the Berne Bureau dated 5th October, 1896, relating to the business for the proposed Washington Congress, which letter had only just reached the Colony, was read.

The PRESIDENT laid upon the Table lists of subjects (Appendix A) that would be likely to engage attention at the Washington Congress, and also of some matters considered urgent affecting intercolonial postal and telegraphic interests; whereupon it was moved by the Hon. Dr. COCKBURN, seconded by the Hon. Mr. DUFFY, and carried,—“That the lists of subjects to be dealt with by the Conference, read by the President, be referred to the Permanent Heads, who are requested to add to the list any other matters of sufficient importance and urgency, to be included in the list, and as soon as the list has been prepared that a copy of the subjects for discussion should be sent round to each delegate.”

It was determined without formal motion that the Ministerial delegates should at once proceed to consider, in Committee, the matter of the Federal Mail Service.† The whole of the other gentlemen (including the shorthand-writer) withdrew.

Later on it was decided to adjourn the Conference until Thursday, at 10 a.m.

J. DALGARNO,
Secretary.

JOSEPH COOK,
President.

THURSDAY,

† NOTE.—*Précis* of this matter will be found on page 5.

THURSDAY, 19 NOVEMBER, 1896.

THE Conference was opened at the General Post Office, Sydney, at 2.50 p.m., when the undermentioned gentlemen, representing the Colonies, were present, viz.:—

Queensland :	{ Hon. A. J. THYNNE, M.L.C., Postmaster-General, Queensland. JOHN McDONNELL, Esq., Under Secretary and Superintendent of Telegraphs.
South Australia :	{ Hon. J. A. COCKBURN, M.D. (Lond.), M.P., Minister for Education and Agriculture, South Australia. Sir CHARLES TODD, K.C.M.G., Postmaster-General, South Australia.
Victoria :	{ Hon. J. GAVAN DUFFY, M.P., Postmaster-General, Victoria.
Tasmania :	{ Hon. J. GAVAN DUFFY, M.P., Postmaster-General, Victoria.
New South Wales :	{ Hon. JOSEPH COOK, M.P., Postmaster-General, New South Wales. S. H. LAMBTON, Esq., J.P., Deputy Postmaster-General, New South Wales.
Western Australia :	Hon. E. H. WITTENOOM, M.L.C., Minister for Mines, West Australia.

Minutes of the proceedings of the 14th instant were read and confirmed.

Mr. LAMBTON brought up Reports of the Permanent Heads relating to (1) the Federal Mail Service; (2) Universal Postal Union Congress; and (3) to other urgent and important matters selected by them for consideration of the Conference. [*Appendices C, D, E.*]

The Conference then proceeded to consider in detail (2) Report as to the Universal Postal Union Congress.

After debate it was moved by the Hon. E. H. WITTENOOM, and seconded by the Hon. A. J. THYNNE:—"That the report be adopted subject to such addition and amendments as may be forwarded by the Colonies previous to the departure of the Australasian delegate for Washington."

(3) Report of the Permanent Heads as to matters of importance and urgency was then read by Mr. Lambton, and discussed.

After revision of the Report (with consent of the three Permanent Heads who signed it), it was moved by Hon. A. J. THYNNE, and seconded by the Hon. J. A. COCKBURN,—"That the Report, as revised, be adopted." Carried.

The Conference next dealt with that portion of the Report signed only by Sir Charles Todd and Mr. Lambton, relating to certain action proposed to be taken by the Queensland Postal Department. After discussion, it was moved by Hon. J. GAVAN DUFFY, and seconded by Hon. J. A. COCKBURN,—"That the Queensland Government be asked to reconsider proposal to rescind, so far as that Colony is concerned, so much of article 12 of the Australasian Convention as relates to the admission of merchandise to the packet post, and the charges intended to be levied by Queensland on intercolonial newspapers." Carried. Hon. Mr. Thynne not voting.

The PRESIDENT then conveyed to Hon. Mr. Thynne the resolution so passed.

The question of representation at the Universal Postal Union Congress was then introduced by the President, and after some discussion it was resolved, on the motion of the Hon. J. GAVAN DUFFY, seconded by Hon. J. A. COCKBURN,—"That a Minister controlling an Australasian Post Office—accompanied by Mr. James Smibert, Deputy-Postmaster-General of Victoria, as postal expert—attend the Washington Congress as Representative of Australasia."

It was resolved, on the motion of Hon. E. H. WITTENOOM, seconded by Hon. A. J. THYNNE,—"That the thanks of the Conference be tendered to the Hon. Joseph Cook for his services as President and for his hospitality during the stay of the Delegates in the Colony."

On the motion of Hon. J. A. COCKBURN, seconded by Hon. J. GAVAN DUFFY, Mr. Dalgarno was thanked for his services as Secretary to the Conference.

The PRESIDENT handed the following draft of a cablegram to the Postmaster-General, London, as the result of the Ministerial consideration of the Federal Mail Service matter, and directed that it be at once transmitted to London, which instruction was immediately carried out.

COPY OF CABLEGRAM SENT TO POSTMASTER-GENERAL, LONDON.

"*Federal Mail Tenders.*—In view of your cables on the subject, and our desire to secure continuance of Federal Mail Service, there appears no alternative but to consent acceptance tender P. and O. as well as Orient Company, as suggested by Imperial Government. Conference, in consenting, urges negotiations to secure following modifications:—

- "1. Term of contracts, five years.
- "2. Duration of voyage, 672 hours for both Companies between Naples, Brindisi, and Adelaide.
- "3. Time of departure from Adelaide, Saturday, 2.30 p.m.
- "4. Steamers to enter Princess Royal Harbour, Albany, until Freemantle Harbour approved by Admiralty Surveyors, after which steamers to enter latter Harbour.

"Sydney, 19/11/96.

"JOSEPH COOK,
President of Intercolonial Conference."

The meeting then adjourned *sine die*.

Confirmed—

J. DALGARNO,
Secretary.

JOSEPH COOK,
President.

Précis re Federal Mail Service, showing action taken from 1st April, 1896, to 12th November, 1896.

At the Conference held in Sydney in January, 1896, it was agreed to sanction the calling of tenders by the London Post Office.

On the 7th July, 1896, the London Post Office received tenders.

On the 24th July, 1896, the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonies forwarded to the Colonies copies of the tenders received, and intimated that by the time they reached Australia a cablegram would be sent indicating the views entertained by Her Majesty's Government of these tenders.

The following are main features of the offers received as compared with present contracts:—

Orient Steam Navigation Company.

	Time allowed for transit of mails from Naples to Adelaide and <i>vice versa</i> .		Time allowed for transit of mails right through from London to Adelaide and <i>vice versa</i> .		Amount of subsidy.
	In days.	In hours.	In days.	In hours.	
Present contract	32½	780	34½ ⁵ / ₄	835	£85,000
Proposed contract	30	720	32½ ⁷ / ₄	775	85,000

Twenty-four hours additional allowed on the homeward trips during the prevalence of the S.W. monsoon.

Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company.

	Time allowed for transit of mails from Brindisi to Adelaide and <i>vice versa</i> .		Time for transit of mails right through from London to Adelaide and <i>vice versa</i> .		Time allowed for transit of mails from Marseilles to Adelaide and <i>vice versa</i> .		Time for transit of mails right through from London to Adelaide and <i>vice versa</i> .		Amount of subsidy.
	In days.	In hours.	In days.	In hours.	In days.	In hours.	In days.	In hours.	
Present contract	32½	780	34½ ¹ / ₄	830	34½ ⁹ / ₂	826	35½ ¹ / ₄	854	£85,000
Proposed contract	28½ ¹ / ₄	686	30½ ⁹ / ₂	736	30½	732	31½ ⁹ / ₂	760	*

Twenty-four hours additional allowed on the homeward trips during the prevalence of the S.W. monsoon.

On the 12th September, 1896, His Excellency the Governor received the following cablegram, dated 10th September, from the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, namely:—

“Most confidential. Postal arrangements which Her Majesty's Government propose. To accept tenders Orient and P. and O., *via* Brindisi, as providing only means of obtaining whole of service required. P. and O. *via* Marseilles nearly one day longer would not be satisfactory to public in this Country or Colonies. Answer as soon as possible whether your Ministers agree to proposals of Her Majesty's Government. Hope it possible by negotiation to obtain something, cannot make further concession with respect to length of time on voyage. Her Majesty's Government before accepting tender propose to cause inquiry to be made as to this point, consequently it is of the utmost importance that everything relating to postal arrangements should be kept secret until arrangements concluded.”

Some confidential telegraphic communication then transpired between the Colonies concerned and an informal Conference was held in October, at Melbourne, between the Postmasters-General New South Wales and Victoria (The Honorables J. Cook and J. Gavan Duffy), which resulted in the despatch of a cablegram from His Excellency the Governor of South Australia, to the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonies as follows:—

“Ocean mails. Employment of black labour by one of the tenderers causing great difficulty. Hope to be able to give definite reply by the middle of November.”

On the 28th October, 1896, His Excellency the Governor of South Australia forwarded to His Excellency the Governor of New South Wales the following cablegram from the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, namely:—

“Postal arrangements. Should be recollected that President of Intercolonial Conference, Sydney, informed Imperial Post Office last March that Colonies accept conditions as to employment of coloured labour, and in reply was informed tenders would be called at once. Difficulties not understood. Tenders have been before Colonies more than six weeks, and as already explained my telegram of 10th September practically there is no alternative measure if federal service is to be maintained. Immediate decision therefore urgently required.”

On the 12th November, 1896, His Excellency the Governor of New South Wales received the following cablegram from the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, namely:—

“Your Ministers should clearly understand Her Majesty's Government cannot undertake, under any circumstances, to be parties to contract from which any class of British subjects is specifically excluded.”

APPENDIX

* NOTE.—No price is given for the Australian portion of the service, it being included in the sums of £310,000 and £330,000 asked for the services by the respective routes *via* Marseilles and *via* Brindisi.

APPENDIX A.

PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE INTERNATIONAL POSTAL UNION CONGRESS TO BE HELD AT WASHINGTON IN 1897.

New South Wales Proposals.

That provision be made in Article 16 of the Vienna Principal Convention for preventing the circulation of indecent or obscene matter through the post.

To amend Article 11 of the Convention, so as to enable official correspondence for Union countries to be transmitted without postage stamps, provided such correspondence bears an indication thereon that the postage has been paid, such as an impression "Postage paid."

Further consideration of proposal of Hobart (1892) Conference to amend clause 34 of the detailed Regulations, so that the statistics required under that clause be less voluminous than at present.

That in lieu of subsection 2° §3 of Article 4 of the Vienna Principal Convention, the following be substituted, viz.:—

For sea transits.	Letters or Post-cards.	Other articles.	
Not exceeding 2,500 miles ...	3 francs	20 centimes	} Per kilogramme.
Between 2,500 and 5,000 miles ...	6 "	40 "	
" 5,000 and 7,500 miles ...	9 "	60 "	
" 7,500 and 10,000 miles...	12 "	80 "	
Over 10,000 miles ...	15 "	1 franc	

That subsection 2° of §4, Article 4, be suppressed.

That the necessary amendments be made in Article 5, §2, subsection 1°; Article 17, §4 and §5; and §4 of detailed Regulations 24 and 25 respectively, in order to bring same into conformity with the changes proposed.

Question of introducing uniformity of practice amongst Union Administrations in connection with the demonetisation of stamps.

To add to Union Regulation 15, so that the name and address of sender be furnished in connection with inquiries for missing registered articles.

To reduce territorial transit rates chargeable under sub-section 1°, paragraph 3, Article 4, of Vienna Principal Convention.

New Zealand Proposals.

That practically autonomous Colonies, forming units of voting groups, be formally described in the regulations as separate administrations of the Union for all purposes except voting.

That the former practice of making out acknowledgments of delivery at offices of posting, and attaching them to registered letters, be reverted to. [*See Regulation 9, of Vienna Convention.*]

That travellers' cards be defined in Article 18 of the detailed Regulations, separately from prices current.

That names of ships be allowed to be inserted in shipping advices.

That complimentary and seasonable inscriptions on Christmas, birthday, Easter, and such like cards be allowed under printed paper regulation (No. 18).

That provision be made whereby the United States of America territorial rates on Australasian mail matter may be reduced to at least the ordinary Postal Union charges.

Western Australian Proposals.

Indemnity for the loss of a registered article. Article 8 of the Convention, clause 1, should be amended to read "is entitled to an indemnity not exceeding 50 francs."

The scope of detailed Regulation 19 might be enlarged to include small packets of merchandise other than "valueless" samples, as is the practice with British Possessions and Intercolonially.

Queensland Proposals.

Omission of subsection 1, paragraph 2, Article 5, so as to allow all correspondence to be dealt with under paragraph 1 of the same article.

Amendment of clause 2, Article 26 of the Convention and detailed Regulation 39, so as to allow more time for the careful consideration of important proposals to amend the Convention and Regulations.

Victorian Proposals.

Re non-payment of postage on French official correspondence posted in the Colonies. [*Vide Article 5, of Vienna Convention, re unpaid letters, page 6.*]

Re union sea transit rates. [*Vide Article 4, of Vienna Convention, page 4.*]

Re revision of Article 27, of Postal Union Convention (page 17), through accession of Cape Colony to the Postal Union.

MATTERS LIKELY TO BE BROUGHT FORWARD BY OTHER UNION COUNTRIES.

By British Post Office.

Re admission of private postcards for circulation within the Union.

Respecting the transmission of papier-mache moulds (casts) serving as stereotypes for the printing of a newspaper, through the post at the rates of postage applicable to "printed papers." [*See Union Regulation 18, paragraph 1.*]

By Luxemburg and United States of America.

Re introduction of a universal postage stamp.

By Egypt and R. G. Ravasi.

Re introduction of a reply-paid envelope.

By Berne Bureau.

Re vote of British South Africa. (Article 27 of Vienna Convention to be modified.)

NEW SOUTH WALES' LIST OF INTERCOLONIAL SUBJECTS FOR CONSIDERATION AT CONFERENCE.

Proposed reduction of territorial transit rates charged by one Australian Colony to the other.

Queensland's proposal for a reapportionment of postage on parcels exchanged between that Colony and New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia.

New South Wales regulations amended, so as to permit of objects of meetings being inserted in notices thereof.

Queensland's intention to transfer to the parcel post, packets containing merchandise.

Re Colonial share of postage on single-rate parcels from Foreign Countries, *via* the United Kingdom.

Proposed reduction of Intercolonial Telegraph Rates.

(a) Proposed reduction of Colonial charges for commission on Money Orders to the United Kingdom.

(b) Question of allowing the use of postage stamps for small remittances to and from United Kingdom and Australia, and the reduction of charges on British and Intercolonial stamps.

Respecting apportionment of expenses of future Conferences.

APPENDIX B.

LIST OF MATTERS OF IMPORTANCE AND URGENCY SELECTED BY PERMANENT HEADS FOR CONSIDERATION AT CONFERENCE :—

1. Letter Bills, proposed form of.
2. Books, Catalogues, &c., being allowed to contain anything beyond address.
3. Australian Convention, Revise of.
4. Postal Guides, Uniformity of.
5. Commission on Money Orders to England, &c.
6. Postal Union Congress.
7. Telegraph Code, Alteration of.
8. Code Addresses.
9. Reply-paid Telegrams.
10. Expenses of future Conferences.
11. Austro-German proposal for uniform rates of Postage on Parcels up to 11 lb.
12. Reduction and apportionment of Postage on Parcels between Great Britain and Australasia.
13. As to whether the addition in writing of the "Objects of the Meeting" should be permitted in the case of Notices of Meeting transmitted by post at packet rate.
14. Reduction of Intercolonial Telegram Rates.
15. Money Order Telegrams.
16. Parcel Post Convention with France.
17. Proposal of Queensland to rescind, so far as that Colony is concerned, so much of Article 12 of the Australasian Convention as relates to the admission of merchandise to the Packet Post.
18. Consideration of Mr. Jules Renard's letter respecting telephonic communication between the capitals of Australia.
19. Universal Reply Letter-cards.
20. Re-arrangement of the division of Postage on Intercolonial Parcels.
21. Intercolonial Newspapers (charge on).

APPENDIX C.

No. 1.—OCEAN MAIL SERVICE.

HAVING been instructed by Honorable Ministers assembled in Conference to report generally upon the tenders now before them, submitted by the British Post Office, for the Federal Mail Service, and also as to the possibilities of providing an alternate service in the event of it being considered undesirable to agree to the acceptance of the P. and O. Company's tender, we have the honor, respectfully, to report as follows:—

I. PRESENT SERVICE.

The present contracts provide a weekly service by the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company and the Orient Company, each on alternate weeks.

The subsidy to each company is £85,000 per annum, or £170,000 in all, of which the British Post Office pays £95,000, and the Australian Colonies, £75,000. The former collects and *retains* the sea transit charges at Postal Union rates, viz.:—

On letters, 15 francs per kilogramme (5s. 6d. per lb.).

On other articles, 1 franc per kilogramme (4½d. per lb.).

on correspondence forwarded to the Colonies by other countries making use of the service.

The Colonies, in like manner, collect and *retain* the charges for sea conveyance on the homeward correspondence of New Zealand and other places not parties to the Federal Service.

New Zealand is charged—

On letters, 12s. per lb.

On packets, 1s. per lb.

On newspapers, 6d. per lb.

12s. per lb. on letters is equivalent to nearly 3d. (2·9) per single-rate letter.

The subsidy paid by the contracting Colonies (£75,000) is apportioned on the basis of population

In addition to the Australian service, the Peninsular and Oriental Company have the contracts for the India and China mails, weekly to Bombay and fortnightly to China, for which they are paid £265,000 per annum.

Under existing arrangements the Indian mails every alternate week are carried by the Australian steamers between Brindisi and Aden, where they are transhipped to or from the Bombay boat.

The China and Singapore mails are also carried in the Australian (Peninsular and Oriental) steamers to and from Colombo and Italy.

Contract time between—

Brindisi and Adelaide (P. and O. steamers) 780 hours.

Naples and Adelaide (Orient steamers) 780 „

The original time allowed to the Orient Company was 768 hours, but on the extension of the contract, or from May, 1895 (since which the steamers have called at Colombo both ways), the time was extended to 780 hours.

II. TENDERS FOR NEW SERVICE.

The only tenderers are the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company and the Orient Company, the present contractors.

The former provide, as at present, for the India, China, and Australian service, viz., weekly mail to Bombay, and fortnightly to both Australia and China (Shanghai). They submit alternative tenders for mails *via* Marseilles and Brindisi.

The Orient Company's tender provides, as now, for a through service between Naples and Australia (Adelaide), calling at Colombo both ways.

Both tenders are for a seven years' contract.

The following is a summary of the tenders:—

Peninsular and Oriental Tender No. 1, £310,000.

		From Marseilles. hours			From London. hours
Marseilles to Bombay (weekly)	... ..	342	... ..	...	370
Marseilles to Shanghai (fortnightly)	... ..	782	... ..	...	810
Marseilles to Adelaide (fortnightly)	... ..	732	... ..	...	760

Peninsular and Oriental Tender No. 2, £330,000.

		From Brindisi. hours			From London. hours
Brindisi to Bombay (weekly)	... ..	302	... ..	...	352
Brindisi to Shanghai (fortnightly)	... ..	736	... ..	...	786
Brindisi to Adelaide (fortnightly)	... ..	686	... ..	...	736

Present Cost of P. and O. Services.

India and China	... ..	£265,000	
Australia	... ..	85,000	
			£350,000
Carriage of parcels to and from Thames	... ..		3,550
			£353,550
Saving in cost of present contracts <i>via</i> Brindisi	... ..		£23,550
Saving in cost <i>via</i> Marseilles	... ..		43,550
and Italian transit charges (say)	... ..		30,000
Total saving on present cost <i>via</i> Marseilles...	... ..		£78,550

Present

Present Contract Time—

Brindisi to Adelaide	...	...	...	...	...	...	780 hours
Time as per tender No. 2	...	...	...	...	...	...	686 "

Saving in time *via* Brindisi 94 hours

It will be seen that a saving of £50,000 a year (£20,000 difference in tender, and £30,000 the estimated payments for Italian transit) might be effected by adopting the Marseilles route for the P. and O. Company's service. This, however, would involve twenty-four hours loss of time, which the Imperial Post Office thinks would not be acceptable to the public in the United Kingdom, India, and the Colonies. It is therefore proposed that the higher tender for the Brindisi route shall be accepted. In this we quite concur.

Orient Company's Tender—

The Orient Company's tender (£85,000) is the same as present contract, but there will be 60 hours' saving of time, viz. :—

Present contract—Naples to Adelaide	...	...	...	...	780 hours
Specified in tender, " " " "	...	...	...	...	720 "

Saving 60 hours

While the time specified by the P. and O. Company between Brindisi and Adelaide is 686 hours (28 days 14 hours), the Orient Company require 720 hours between Naples and Adelaide. The time, in our opinion, should be reduced to 672 hours, or 28 days by both routes. There can be no doubt the P. and O. Company, with their new boats, could easily accomplish this.

POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES.

We take it for granted that there is no question as to the acceptance of the Orient Company's tender, and that the only thing desired is to ascertain whether there would be any means of arranging a satisfactory service other than the P. and O., to alternate with the Orient Company.

Table A.

We attach a statement, in which particulars are given of every other steam service now running which could possibly be made available for the conveyance of mails to Great Britain, and from Great Britain to the Colonies.

Assuming that the Orient Company's day of departure from Sydney is altered; as it no doubt will be under the proposed accelerated rate of speed, and that such day will be Wednesday from Sydney and Friday from Adelaide, the first question is whether any other service can be utilised for the despatch of mails on the alternate week and on the same day of the week, as it is obvious that any satisfactory weekly service should provide for each mail leaving Adelaide, and being due in London on the same day of the week.

Unfortunately, none of the other lines would give a fortnightly service, all being either four-weekly, calendar monthly, or at irregular intervals, so that, even if it were possible to provide a service to alternate weekly with the Orient, it would be necessary to utilise two of the other lines of steamers for the purpose of maintaining the weekly service.

Dealing first with the Suez route, we will suppose that the Orient's day of departure from Adelaide be Friday, the 13th instant, the following will show how the steamers would leave Adelaide :—

Messageries Maritimes on Monday, 9th.

Orient on Friday, 13th.

North German Lloyds on Saturday, 14th.

The following week there would be no mail steamers.

The third week the Orient would leave on the 27th.

The fourth week there would be no mail steamers.

The fifth week the Messageries Maritimes on Monday (December 7th).

Orient on Friday, 11th.

North German Lloyds on Saturday, 12th (December).

The only other steamers, in addition to the above, would be an occasional one by Lund's Line.

A mail will leave Sydney, *via* San Francisco, on Monday, November 23rd, the dates for closing mails being :—

Adelaide, Thursday, 19th.

Melbourne, Friday, 20th.

This service would, of course, be useless to Western Australia.

Further, the San Francisco Service as at present carried out would not alternate with the Orient even on its four-weekly date (Orient, say, Friday, 13th November, 'Frisco, Monday, 23rd November). Moreover, the time occupied from the Colonies would be longer even in the case of New South Wales and Queensland than by the Suez line, and still longer in the case of Victoria and the western colonies.

With regard to the Vancouver line. If that were made four-weekly and to alternate fortnightly with the 'Frisco and Orient, a fairly good alternate service might be arranged; but it is hardly necessary to point out that the Vancouver service, as now carried on—whatever its future may be—is not sufficiently satisfactory to rely upon as an important link in the regular weekly service with Great Britain.

Supposing that the Colonies should succeed in making satisfactory arrangements for a service alternating with the Orient Company, the London Post Office will have to make provision for the alternate weeks outwards. This they would probably do by agreement with the P. & O. Company, in which case that Company's steamers, which would be utilised as now for carrying the Indian and China mails between Aden and Brindisi, would leave Adelaide on the return voyage on the alternate mail day, and there is no doubt that the bulk of the correspondence for England would be marked by the public to be forwarded by those steamers, and the Colonies would be compelled to so forward the correspondence and

and pay the British Post Office transit rates to be mutually agreed upon—probably the Postal Union rates, namely, 5s. 6d. per lb. for letters and postcards and 4½d. per lb. for other articles, besides a special rate on parcels, possibly 2d. per lb., which, under the new contracts, will be included as ordinary mail matter. The Colonies would, therefore, still *pro tanto* be paying a line of steamers employing coloured labour.

It will thus be seen that out of all the steamers plying between here and Great Britain, which could possibly be made available for conveyance of mails, the services *via* 'Frisco and the Messageries Maritimes are the only ones that could be made to fairly alternate with the Orient, and the question occurs to us in this connection, whether it would be politic to make use of foreign steamers for the conveyance of mails, and whether it is not likely that as much objection would be taken to our mails being sent by foreign steamers as is now taken to sending them by British ships which employ coloured labour.

The Messageries steamers really afford the quickest transit of any on the list, and are even quicker than the P. & O. and Orient under the latter's present contracts, but according to existing time-tables they run almost side by side with the Orient, and even if the time-tables of one or other were changed so as to alternate fortnightly there would still be the double objection, namely, that of sending mails by foreign steamers and by foreign steamers which employ—as the Messageries do—coloured labour.

Having now dealt with what appear to be possible lines that *could* be made available for an alternate service with Great Britain, we propose offering a few observations on the other lines enumerated in the list, given in table A, taking them in numerical order.

- (1.) *Queensland Royal Mail Line*.—It will be seen that this would only provide a forty-seven days homewards and fifty-two days outwards service to and from Sydney, and on that ground alone would be unsatisfactory. It is, moreover, only four-weekly, and is only used, even by Queensland, for European mails to and from her extreme Northern ports.
- (2.) *Canadian-Australian Line*.—Calendar monthly. Already dealt with.
- (3.) *Union Company's Line, via San Francisco*.—Four-weekly. Already dealt with.
- (4.) *Messageries Maritimes Line*.—Four-weekly. Already dealt with.
- (5.) *North German Lloyd's Line*.—Four-weekly. Already dealt with.
- (6.) *Lund's Blue Anchor Line* seems altogether out of the question, the intervals and dates being too uncertain, and evidently, without a very much larger payment than the poundage upon letters, would not be likely to bind themselves to either a fixed day fortnightly or four-weekly, especially during the wool seasons. They are, moreover, principally cargo boats, and although they give their time as about forty days from Sydney or Melbourne, we are inclined to think that their actual time must be very much longer. Another objection is that it is uncertain whether they call regularly at Melbourne or Adelaide, and they do not call at any European port *en route*; and in any case if it were decided to utilise their services as mail-carriers, some contract or agreement would have to be made binding them to regular intervals, to a very much shorter service—which the present steamers could not perform—and, of course, to calling regularly at Melbourne and Adelaide.
7. *Aberdeen White Star Line, via Albany and the Cape*.—This only gives a calendar monthly service, and therefore could not possibly alternate with a four-weekly one, unless their time-tables were wholly rearranged; moreover, the time occupied—some forty-nine days home and forty-four out—would be quite unsuitable for present requirements. Of course, they do not touch at any European port.
8. *The Gulf Line* appears so uncertain, and the time occupied so long—about forty-nine days home and fifty-five out—that nothing more need be said in reference thereto, and the same remarks apply to the
9. *Port Line*; also to the
10. *Transvaal Line*, no fixed dates of departure being observed in the case of the latter, and the time occupied being about sixty days.
11. *Shaw-Savill and Albion Company's Line*, of which line the "Gothic" is the principal steamer.—This line, as far as mainland Colonies are concerned, would not be sufficiently expeditious, even if it were possible to alternate their four-weekly trips with any other, which, of course, could not be done. Moreover, they only run eleven trips a year (see table), and call at a colonial port (Hobart) outwards only, returning to England by Cape Horn.
12. *New Zealand Shipping Company's Line*.—This is a forty-eight and forty-five days' service, which, as in other cases, would alone preclude its use as a mail line. They also call at Hobart one way only, returning to England by the Horn.

Of course we assume that the payments, either at Union rates or at any other rates, that would be offered, would not be sufficient to induce any of these steamers to leave at suitable fixed dates, or to go out of their course to land the mails at an Italian or other European port.

Should it be determined to accept the tenders of both Companies as proposed by the London Office, we concur, as already stated, in the opinion of that office that the European port for the P. and O. Company should be Brindisi, as the acceleration provided for thereby will, in our opinion, fully warrant the extra cost of calling at that port.

We append a Table (marked B.), showing what would be the effect in regard to the arrivals and departures at England and Australia under the accelerated time-table, supposing the day from Adelaide were made Friday. This would, in our opinion, be on the whole the most convenient day, although possibly Saturday from Adelaide, which it is understood Western Australia desires, might do nearly as well. It is, however, intimated in the English despatches that an attempt is to be made to obtain a still further acceleration in speed, and of course until the precise number of days and hours to be allowed for the sea voyage is fixed it will not be possible to advise definitely as to what should be the day of the arrival and departure at either end.

We

We conclude our Report by submitting the following statement, which shows what would be the probable financial result of accepting the Orient tender, and paying poundage rates, namely, 12s. per lb. of letters, 1s. per lb. of books and packets, 6d. per lb. of newspapers, and 2d. per lb. of parcels, on mails forwarded by the P. & O. or other steamers.

Dr.			
To Colonial share of subsidy to Orient Company ...	£37,500		
„ Estimated payments to P. & O., or other Company, at above rates ...	28,000		
„ Transit of mails of Contracting Colonies through European Countries, &c. ...	11,000		
„ Overland transit of mail matter through Australian Colonies ...	3,000		
			£79,500
Cr.			
By Estimated postages that would be collected in the Colonies ...	£52,000		
„ Estimated amount of Australian land transit rates on mails from Europe, &c. ...	2,500		
„ Estimated receipts from non-contracting Colonies, &c. ...	1,500		
			£56,000
Approximate net cost per annum to contracting Colonies ...			23,500
The present net cost per annum is about ...			£31,500
Approximate saving ...			£8,000

The poundage rates mentioned above are, in the case of letters, in excess of the postage being, with European transit rates added, equal to about 3½d. per single-rate letter, and although the present saving would be, approximately, as stated, the loss would increase with the growth of correspondence, whereas the reverse would be the result in the case of fixed subsidies.

S. H. LAMBTON.
C. TODD.
JOHN M'DONNELL.

General Post Office, Sydney, 17th November, 1896.

A.

TABLE showing possibilities of mail communication between Australia and the United Kingdom by the several lines of steamers now running—other than the two lines at present subsidised, namely, the Peninsular and Oriental and the Orient—and giving an illustrative return trip in each case.

1.—QUEENSLAND ROYAL MAIL LINE—4-Weekly.

Leave—		Arrive—		No. of Days.	Leave—		Arrive—		No. of Days.
Adelaide ...	Tue., Nov. 3...	London	Tue., Dec. 22...	49	London	Fri., Dec. 25 ...	Brisbane...	Sat., Feb. 13...	50
Melbourne.	Wed., „ 4...	„	„ 22...	48	„	„ 25 ...	Sydney ...	Mon., „ 15...	52
Sydney ...	Thu., „ 5...	„	„ 22...	47	„	„ 25 ...	Melbourne	Wed., „ 17...	54
Brisbane ...	Sat., „ 7...	„	„ 22...	45	„	„ 25 ...	Adelaide...	Thu., „ 18...	55

Mails shipped and landed at Brisbane.

2.—CANADIAN-AUSTRALIAN LINE—Monthly.

Leave—		Arrive—		No. of Days.	Leave—		Arrive—		No. of Days.
Brisbane ...	Sun., Nov. 8 ...	London	Thu., Dec. 17...	39	London	Fri., Dec. 25 ...	Sydney ...	Mon., Feb. 1...	38
Adelaide ...	Fri., „ 6 ...	„	„ 17 ...	41	„	„ 25 ...	Melbourne	Tue., „ 2...	39
Melbourne.	Mon., „ 9 ...	„	„ 17 ...	38	„	„ 25 ...	Adelaide...	Wed., „ 3...	40
Sydney ...	Tue., „ 10 ...	„	„ 17 ...	37	„	„ 25 ...	Brisbane...	Tue., „ 2...	39

Mails shipped and landed at Sydney.

3.—UNION COMPANY'S LINE, VIA SAN FRANCISCO—4-Weekly.

Leave—		Arrive—		No. of Days.	Leave—		Arrive—		No. of Days.
Brisbane ...	Fri., Nov. 20...	London	Wed., Dec. 30	40	London	Sat., Jan. 23...	Sydney ...	Tue., Mar. 2...	38
Adelaide ...	Thu., „ 19...	„	„ 30	41	„	„ 23...	Melbourne	Wed., „ 3...	39
Melbourne	Sat., „ 21...	„	„ 30	39	„	„ 23...	Adelaide ..	Thu., „ 4...	40
Sydney ...	Mon., „ 23...	„	„ 30	37	„	„ 23...	Brisbane	Wed., „ 3...	39

Mails shipped and landed at Sydney.

4.—MESSAGERIES MARITIMES LINE—Four-weekly.

Leave—		Arrive—		No. of Days.	Leave—		Arrive.		No. of Days.
Brisbane ...	Wed., Nov. 4...	London	Wed., Dec. 9...	35	London	Sat., Jan. 2...	Adelaide...	Mon., Feb. 1...	30
Sydney ...	Fri., " 6...	" ...	" " 9...	33	" ...	" " 2...	Melbourne	Tue., " 2...	31
Melbourne	Sat., " 7...	" ...	" " 9...	32	" ...	" " 2...	Sydney ...	Wed., " 3...	32
Adelaide ...	Mon., " 9...	" ...	" " 9...	31	" ...	" " 2...	Brisbane...	Thu., " 4...	33

Mails shipped and landed at Adelaide.

5.—NORD-DEUTSCHER LLOYD'S LINE—Four-weekly.

Leave—		Arrive—		No. of Days.	Leave—		Arrive—		No. of Days.
Brisbane ...	Tue., Nov. 10...	London	Sun., Dec. 20...	40	London	Mon., Dec. 28...	Adelaide ..	Wed., Feb. 3...	37
Sydney ...	Thu., " 12...	" ...	" " 20...	38	" ...	" " 28...	Melbourne	Thu., " 4...	38
Melbourne.	Fri., " 13...	" ...	" " 20...	37	" ...	" " 28...	Sydney ...	Fri., " 5...	39
Adelaide ...	Sat., " 14...	" ...	" " 20...	36	" ...	" " 28...	Brisbane...	Sat., " 6...	40

Mails shipped and landed at Adelaide.

6.—LUND'S "BLUE ANCHOR" LINE.

About Fortnightly (at times Weekly) during Wool Season—September to end of January.
About Monthly during the remainder of the year.

Leave—		Arrive—	No. of Days.	Leave—		Arrive—	No. of Days.
Brisbane ...	2 days before despatch from Sydney.	London ...	About 42 or 43.	London ...	No fixed dates; the despatch depending on loading.		
Sydney ...	No fixed dates; the despatch depending on loading.	„ ...	About 40	„ ...	Calling depends on whether there is any loading for either	Adelaide ..	About 40 to Melbourne or Sydney.
Melbourne.	Calling uncertain, and depending upon whether further loading is required.	„ ...	from Sydney or	„ ...	port.	Melbourne. Sydney ...	
Adelaide ...		„ ...	Melbourne.	„ ...	.....	Brisbane ..	About 41 or 42.
Via Suez Canal.				Via Cape Town.			

7.—ABERDEEN "WHITE STAR" LINE—Monthly.

Leave—		Arrive—	No. of Days.	Leave—		Arrive—	No. of Days.
Brisbane ...	3 days } before the despatch	London ...	About 51	London ...	No fixed dates, the despatch depending on the loading.	Melbourne	About 43
Sydney ...	1 day } from Melbourne.	" ...	" 49	" ...	.....	Sydney ...	" 44
Melbourne	No fixed dates, the despatch depending on the loading.	" ...	" 48	" ...	.....	Brisbane ..	" 45
Via Albany and Cape Town.				Via Cape Town.			

8.—GULF LINE—As loading is obtainable.

Leave—		Arrive—	No. of Days.	Leave—		Arrive—	No. of Days.
Brisbane ...	3 days } before the despatch	* London ...	About 51	London †	No fixed dates, the despatch depending on the loading.	Melbourne	About 54 to Melbourne.
Sydney ...	1 day } from Melbourne.	" ...	" 49	or	.....	Sydney ...	About 55
Melbourne	No fixed dates, the despatch depending on loading.	" ...	" 48 from Melbourne	Liverpool	.....	Brisbane ..	" 56
Adelaide ...	Call only when loading is required to fill up.	" ...		"	.....	
* Steamer occasionally goes to Liverpool instead of London, and occasionally calls at Albany.				† Steamer occasionally starts from London, but in most cases from Liverpool.			

9.—PORT LINE—As loading is obtainable.

Leave—	Arrive—	No. of Days.	Leave—	Arrive—	No. of Days
Brisbane... 2 days before despatch from Sydney.	London ...	About 62	London... No fixed dates, the despatch depending on the loading.		
Sydney ... No fixed dates, the despatch depending on loading.	" ...	About 60 from Sydney.	Calling at these ports is {	Adelaide...	About 90 to Sydney if steamer calls at Free-mantle; if not, about 60.
Melbourne } Calling at these ports is	" ...	.....	very uncertain.	Melbourne	
Adelaide ... } very uncertain.	" ...	.....		Sydney ...	
				Brisbane...	About 91 or 61
Via Suez Canal.			Via Cape Town.		

10.—NEW LINE—"TRANSVAAL," "KAFFIR," &c.

About 3-weekly during the wool season (September to end of January) only.

Leave—	Arrive—	No. of Days.	Leave—	Arrive—	No. of Days.
Brisbane... 2 days before despatch from Sydney.	London ...	About 62	London... No fixed dates, the despatch depending on the loading.	Sydney ...	About 60 to Sydney.
Sydney No fixed dates, the despatch depending on the loading.	" ...	About 60 from Sydney.	These steamers load at Port Pirie, and then come on direct to Sydney.		
Melbourne } Calling at these ports is	" ...	.....	" ...	Brisbane...	About 61.
Adelaide ... } very uncertain.	" ...	.....		
Via Suez Canal.			Via Cape Town.		

11.—SHAW-SAVILL AND ALBION COMPANY'S LINE.

4-weekly—except that two trips are dropped at three different periods of the year.

Leave—	Arrive—	No. of Days.	Leave—	Arrive—	No. of Days.
Brisbane ... Wed., Nov. 4...	London Tue., Dec. 22...	48	London Sat., Dec. 26...	Hobart ... Wed., Feb. 3...	39
Adelaide ... Wed., " 4...	" " " 22...	48	" " " 26...	Melbourne Fri., " 5...	41
Melbourne Thu., " 5...	" " " 22...	47	" " " 26...	Adelaide Sat., " 6...	42
Sydney Fri., " 6...	" " " 22...	46	" " " 26...	Sydney ... Sat., " 6...	42
Wellington Thu., " 12...	" " " 22...	40	" " " 26...	Brisbane Mon., " 8...	43
Mails shipped at Wellington.			Mails landed at Hobart.		

12.—NEW ZEALAND SHIPPING COMPANY'S LINE—4-weekly.

Leave—	Arrive—	No. of Days.	Leave—	Arrive—	No. of Days.
Brisbane ... Wed., Oct. 21	London Thur., Dec. 10	50	London Sat., Dec. 12 ...	Hobart ... Thu., Jan. 21...	40
Adelaide ... " " 21	" " " 10	50	" " " " ...	Melbourne Sat., " 23...	42
Melbourne Thu., " 22	" " " 10	49	" " " " ...	Adelaide... Tue., " 26...	45
Sydney Fri., " 23	" " " 10	48	" " " " ...	Sydney ... " 26...	45
Wellington Thu., " 29	" " " 10	42	" " " " ...	Brisbane... Wed., " 27...	46
Mails shipped at Wellington.			Mails landed at Hobart.		

B.

SUGGESTED Time-tables in the event of the Tenders of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, *via* Brindisi, and the Orient Company, *via* Naples, to and from London and Adelaide, being accepted at their Tender times.

PENINSULAR AND ORIENTAL—*VIA* BRINDISI.

Leave Brisbane.	Leave Sydney.	Leave Melbourne.	Leave Adelaide.	Leave Albany.	Arrive London.	Leave London.	Arrive Albany.	Arrive Adelaide.	Arrive Melbourne.	Arrive Sydney.	Arrive Brisbane.
Tues, Jan. 12 " " 26 " Feb. 9	Wed., Jan. 13 " " 27 " Feb. 10	Thur., Jan. 14 " " 28 " Feb. 11	Fri., Jan. 15 " " 29 " Feb. 12	Mon., Jan. 18 " Feb. 1 " " 15	Mon., Feb. 15 " Mar. 1 " " 15	* Fri., Feb. 19 " Mar. 5 " " 19	Fri., Mar. 19 " April 2 " " 16	Mon., Mar. 22 " April 5 " " 19	Tues., Mar. 23 " April 6 " " 20	Wed., Mar. 24 " April 7 " " 21	Thur. Mar. 25 " April 8 " " 22
Brisbane to London 34 days. Sydney " 33 " Melbourne " 32 " Adelaide " 30 " 16 hours. Albany " 29 "						London to Albany 28 days. " Adelaide 30 " 16 hours. " Melbourne 32 " " Sydney 33 " " Brisbane 34 "					

ORIENT—*VIA* NAPLES.

Leave Brisbane.	Leave Sydney.	Leave Melbourne.	Leave Adelaide.	Leave Albany.	Arrive London.	Leave London.	Arrive Albany.	Arrive Adelaide.	Arrive Melbourne.	Arrive Sydney.	Arrive Brisbane.
Tues., Jan. 19 " Feb. 2 " " 16	Wed., Jan. 20 " Feb. 3 " " 17	Thu., Jan. 21 " Feb. 4 " " 18	Fri., Jan. 22 " Feb. 5 " " 19	Mon., Jan. 25 " Feb. 8 " " 22	Tues., Feb. 23 " Mar. 9 " " 23	* Fri., Feb. 26 " Mar. 12 " " 26	Sat., Mar. 27 " Apl. 10 " " 24	Tues., Mar. 30 " Apl. 13 " " 27	Wed., Mar. 31 " Apl. 14 " " 28	Thu., Apl. 1 " " 15 " " 29	Fri., Apl. 2 " " 16 " " 30
Brisbane to London 35 days. Sydney " 34 " Melbourne " 33 " Adelaide " 32 " Albany " 29 "						London to Albany 29 days. " Adelaide 32 " " Melbourne 33 " " Sydney 34 " " Brisbane 35 "					

* Present day from London—From past experience it is known to be the best and the only day London would be likely to agree to.

APPENDIX D.

No. 2.—UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION CONGRESS.

WE submit the following Report and recommendations in reference to the Universal Postal Union Congress to be held at Washington in May, 1897 :—

The Australasian Colonies, on joining the Universal Postal Union (1st October, 1891), became entitled to representation at its Congresses and Conferences—that is to say, the whole of the Australasian Colonies are considered as one “country,” they may send one or several delegates if desired, all of whom may join in the debates, but have collectively only one vote at the Congress.

Briefly stated, the conditions under which the Colonies joined the Union were that, Australasia should have one joint vote, and that, pending the next quinquennial meeting, no alteration in the maritime transit rates or reduction in postal charges should be made.

At the Postal and Telegraphic Conference held in Brisbane, in March, 1893, the following resolution was carried, viz. :—That, in the opinion of this Conference, one representative should be sent from Australasia on behalf of all the Colonies to represent them at the Postal Union Congress.”

At the New Zealand Postal and Telegraphic Conference, in March, 1894, the question of the appointment of a delegate to attend the Postal Union Congress at its next meeting was discussed, but a decision was postponed. And at the Hobart Conference, in February, 1895, a motion was carried that the question of electing a delegate to the Postal Union Congress be deferred until next Conference.

In May last a circular letter was received from the Berne Bureau, requesting, by the 30th June, particulars of the subjects which the Australasian Colonies desired to submit to the forthcoming Congress.

As Australasia is only one territory in the Postal Union, it follows that the Colonies must be unanimous, and with that object a list of subjects which it is proposed to bring forward was prepared and the views of the different Colonies invited. The replies received showed that there was little chance of arriving at unanimity by correspondence, and it was decided to postpone the matter until the next Inter-colonial Conference. At the same time the Bureau was informed that it was not possible to forward a list of proposals such as asked for until the Colonies had met in conference and endeavoured to come into agreement on the subjects which they proposed to bring forward. It was stated that the Conference would probably take place about September or October (but for various reasons it could not be convened until the present month); and a hope was expressed that it would not then be too late to include the Australasian subjects in the list, which it was understood was being prepared by the Berne Bureau. In reply, the Bureau points out that the date mentioned for our proposals will be too late to include them in the principal book, but suggests that they be collected and form a supplement, and forwarded to the Union Administrations, or distributed to the delegates at the time of the opening Session of the Congress.

We respectfully recommend that in view of the many important questions affecting the Colonies that will be discussed at the Washington Congress in May next, the Colonies should be represented thereat, and that the delegate should be accompanied by at least one postal expert, and be instructed on the following subjects :—

1. *Reduction of territorial transit rates chargeable under sub-section 1°, paragraph 3, Article 4, of Vienna Principal Convention.*

We consider that the following rates, namely, 2 francs per kilogramme (8½d. per lb.) for letters and post-cards, and 25 centimes per kilogramme (1½d. per lb.) for other articles, for the territorial transit through each intermediate country, is much too high, and we suggest that these rates be reduced to—

1 franc per kilo. (4½d. per lb.), and
10 centimes per kilo. (¾d. per lb.), respectively,

which would even then be somewhat higher in the case of letters and post-cards than is now charged by Australian Colonies on forward mails.

2. *Reduction of sea transit rates.*

That in lieu of sub-section 2° §3 of Article 4 of the Vienna Principal Convention, the following be substituted, namely :—

For sea transits.	Letters or Post Cards.	Other Articles.
Not exceeding 2,500 miles	3 francs	20 centimes
Between 2,500 and 5,000 miles	6 francs	40 centimes
Between 5,000 and 7,500 miles	9 francs	60 centimes
Between 7,500 and 10,000 miles	12 francs	80 centimes
Over 10,000 miles	15 francs	1 franc

Per kilogramme.

That sub-section 2° of §4 of Article 4 be suppressed.

That the necessary amendments be made in Article 5 §2, sub-section 1°; Article 17, §4 and §5; and §4 of Detailed Regulations 24 and 25, respectively, in order to bring the same into conformity with the changes proposed.

3. *Question of alteration of surcharges provided for in Article 5.*

We recommend the omission of the following words in sub-section 1 of paragraph 2, “25 centimes per single rate for letters,” as there is no country in the Union now availing itself of the right to make this charge on letters for Union countries, although the surcharge provided for in this Article is made on other articles.

4. *Re indemnity for the loss of registered articles, Article 8 of the Convention, clause 1.*

We think it desirable that in the interests of the countries where the system of indemnity is recognised, the Article should be amended by the insertion of the words “Not exceeding” after the word “indemnity,” and before “50 francs.” At the same time we may call attention to the fact that the Australasian Colonies have, in almost all cases, declined to accept responsibility in regard to registered articles.

5. *Prepayment of postage on official correspondence.*

We recommend that Article XI of the Convention be amended so as to enable official correspondence for Union countries to be transmitted without postage stamps, provided such correspondence bears an indication thereon that the postage has been paid, and name of country, such as an impression, "Postage paid, New South Wales."

6. *Circulation of indecent or obscene matter by post.*

We recommend that provision be made in Article XVI of the Vienna Principal Convention for preventing the circulation of indecent or obscene matter through the post.

7. *Proposed amendment of Clause 2, Article 26 of the Convention, and Detailed Regulation 39 so as to allow more time for the careful consideration of important proposals to amend the Convention Regulations.*

The time allowed under the Convention no doubt meets all the requirements of European countries to consider and reply to any propositions, but is insufficient in the case of Australasian Colonies, which have to consult each other before coming to any conclusion, and before replying to Berne.

We, therefore, suggest that longer time should be allowed than that provided for in Article 26, and we further suggest that only proposals of an urgent character should be submitted for consideration between two consecutive meetings of Congress.

8. *Question of reduction of United States territorial transit rates on Australasian mail-matter.*

The United States Post Office at present charges for the transmission of closed mails between San Francisco and New York—

- 6 francs per kilogramme for letters (2s. 2d. per lb.).
- 2 francs per kilogramme on other articles (8½d. per lb.).

The ordinary Union territorial transit rates are—

- 2 francs per kilo. on letters (8½d. per lb.).
- 25 centimes per kilo. on other articles (1½d. per lb.).

Reductions were urged at the Brisbane (1893) and Wellington (1894) Conferences, and communications were addressed to the Postmaster-General at Washington, who stated in reply that the present special charges do not cover actual cost of transit, and in a later letter, that no reduction could be made pending further legislation. In view, however, of the fact that these rates are almost prohibitory (being the highest levied by any Union country), and tend to discourage the transmission of mails by the San Francisco route, we recommend that the representative at Washington should bring this matter before the Postal Union Congress, and urge that the rates be reduced.

Notwithstanding that substantial reductions have been made in French and Italian territorial rates, those of United States of America remain unaltered.

9. *"Regulation IX—Acknowledgment of Delivery.*

1. "Articles for which the sender requires an acknowledgment of delivery must be marked very clearly with the inscription 'Avis de reception,' or be stamped with the letters A.R.
2. Acknowledgments of delivery must be prepared by the offices of destination on a form in accordance with, or analogous to, the pattern A annexed, and sent by those offices to the offices of origin, whose duty it is to deliver the acknowledgments to the senders of the articles to which they relate. Acknowledgments of delivery must be drawn up in French, or must bear a sublineary translation in that language."

Under Detailed Regulation 9 to the Lisbon Convention (1885) forms of acknowledgment of receipt of registered articles were prepared by the offices of origin, but for some reason not known here the practice has been altered in the Vienna Convention so that the offices of delivery of registered articles are required to prepare such forms. (*See Regulation 9.*)

In 1893 Bulgaria made a proposal to amend Regulation 9 so as to revert to the former practice, but on being submitted to the vote of Union offices the proposal was rejected.

We suggest that the former practice of making out acknowledgments of delivery at offices of posting and attaching them to registered letters be reverted to.

10. *Question of adding to Union Regulation 15, so that the name and address of sender be furnished in connection with inquiries for missing registered articles.*

We are of opinion that no instruction on this subject is necessary to the delegate.

11. *Travellers' Cards—Article 18.*

After the words "address cards" in paragraph 1, Article 18, Detailed Regulations, we recommend that the words "travellers' cards" be inserted, so as to agree with sub-paragraph H, of paragraph 4, which introduces travellers' cards.

12. *Question of complimentary and seasonable inscriptions being allowed on Christmas, Easter, Birthday, and such like cards.*

In 1893, at the instance of the British Post Office, the question whether "words added by hand on so-called 'Christmas' or 'New Year's' cards, such as 'For John, with Aunt Mary's love,' 'To dear Mary from Cousin Jane,' &c.," may be considered as dedications in the sense of letter "1" of paragraph 4 of Article 18 of the Detailed Regulations to the Principal Convention was submitted to an interpretative vote of Postal Union Offices. The question was resolved in the negative—nineteen offices out of thirty offices which voted declaring against the proposal.

Cards of the class referred to are exchanged between the Australasian Colonies and the United Kingdom, and it has been arranged that they shall also be exchanged between the colonies and such other Union Administrations as may so agree with the London Office.

We advise that the question be again considered at the forthcoming Congress with a view to these inscriptions being allowed.

13. *Question of enlarging the scope of Detailed Regulation 19 so as to include small packets of merchandise.*

We recommend that paragraph 1 of these Regulations be amended so as to admit small packets of merchandise, not exceeding 1 lb. (not necessarily samples), being allowed to pass at printed paper rates, as is the practice in British possessions and in the Colonies.

14. *Detailed Regulation 32.*

We advise that Regulation 32, paragraph 5, be amended by inserting after the words "British Colonies of Australasia" the following words:—" (New South Wales, Victoria, New Zealand, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Western Australia, and Fiji)."

15. *Question of amending Clause 34 of the Detailed Regulations, so that the statistics required under the clause be less voluminous.*

The statistics required under clause 34 of the Detailed Regulations of the Union are, in our opinion, of an unnecessarily voluminous character, and entail a large amount of clerical labour; and we suggest that the Australasian delegate be instructed to press for an amendment in the direction of simplicity.

16. *Question of introducing uniformity of practice amongst Union Administrations in connection with the demonetization of stamps.*

We recommend that a copy of the statement laid before the New Zealand Conference in 1894 be forwarded to the delegate, with an intimation that Australasia favours such a system as would provide for all stamps which have been sold to the public being accepted in payment of correspondence irrespective of the date of issue.

17. *Question of names of ships being allowed to be inserted in shipping advices.*

This question has been raised by the New Zealand Post Office, and we bring it forward accordingly.

Sub-section (1), paragraph 3, detailed regulation 18, permits the indication in manuscript, in advices of the departures of ships of the dates of those departures, and we consider that this necessarily allows the insertion in such advices of the names of the ships; but should there be any doubt in the matter we advise that the question be brought forward for decision at the Washington Congress.

18. *Question of French Consular correspondence posted in Australia addressed to the French Government being forwarded unstamped.*

This question has been the subject of considerable correspondence. Whilst it may be argued that the Consular officers are strictly within their rights in claiming the transmission of their letters unpaid, seeing that the Union Convention permits of unpaid letters being forwarded through the post subject to a charge of double the deficient postage on delivery, we consider that the spirit of the Convention is overridden, and the practice operates to the detriment of the Colonies, which have to pay for the carriage of the correspondence by sea and land, and are, therefore, entitled to the postage.

The object of the provision in the Union Regulations in allowing unpaid letters to be sent is to avoid public inconvenience and to meet urgent necessities, but is discouraged by a charge of double the deficient postage to be collected from the addressee. This deterrent does not, however, apply in the case of correspondence of the nature referred to where the charges marked by the office of posting are waived on delivery.

As pointed out by the London Office in a letter dated 4th October, 1895, the practice complained of is "one which it is considered difficult to defend, and which is contrary to the views and practices of this country, and indeed of almost all countries of the civilised world."

As an illustration of how this provision operates, it would be possible for the French Consul at Melbourne to post for transmission by the Messageries Maritime steamers a quantity of correspondence weighing 1 kilo. unpaid—not only would Victoria be deprived of the postage, but she would have to pay the French Government 15 fr., or 12s., for the sea transit to Marseilles.

We strongly urge that the Australasian delegate be instructed to represent the unfairness of the practice complained of.

Whilst advising, as we have done, the reduction of the Union territorial and sea rates, we strongly advise that no reduction of the postage rates be agreed to as affecting the Australasian Colonies. It must be borne in mind that these Colonies have to pay large subsidies for their mail services to ensure speed and regularity, which subsidies are not nearly covered by the postages at present rates.

In conclusion, we have to report that the first Book of Proposals to be submitted to the Washington Postal Congress only came to hand whilst the Conference was sitting. The proposals are in French, and very voluminous, and we have not had time to consider them. Further proposals have yet to arrive, and so soon as they reach us, and have been translated, it will probably be necessary to hold another meeting to enable us to confer and report to Ministers what other instructions may be required for the Australasian delegate in regard to the whole of the proposals, many of which will, no doubt, be of an important character, requiring careful consideration.

General Post Office, Sydney,
17th November, 1896.

S. H. LAMBTON.
C. TODD.
JOHN McDONNELL.

APPENDIX E.

No. 3.—INTERCOLONIAL MATTERS.

WE have the honor to submit the following report on intercolonial matters remitted to us by Ministers :—

Appendix.

1. *Proposed new form of intercolonial letter-bill.*

We submit for adoption new forms of letter-bill 1 and 2 for use intercolonially.

2. *Question of allowing on the face of covers of books, catalogues, &c., anything beyond the name, occupation, and address of senders and addressees.*

We recommend that no objection be raised to any printed matter being allowed on the covers of articles entitled to pass at book rate, provided that a clear and conspicuous space be left for the address of the article.

3. *Question of revising the Australasian Postal Convention.*

We do not think it would lead to any good result if a revision were attempted at this sitting.

We recommend that the matter be allowed to stand over until another opportunity offers for giving attention thereto.

4. *Question of having Postal Guides on uniform lines.*

In compliance with the request contained in a resolution of the Hobart Conference of 1895, the Postmaster-General of South Australia has submitted a specimen of a proposed uniform Postal Guide. We advise that copies be sent to the Postal Departments of the other Colonies for consideration and report.

5. *Question of reducing the commission on Money Orders to the United Kingdom.*

We consider that the commission on Money Orders to the United Kingdom should be reduced and made uniform throughout the Australasian Colonies, and recommend for the consideration of the other Postal Administrations the following rates, namely :—

Not exceeding £1 ...	...	...	...	...	s.	d.
Between £1 and £2 ...	...	...	...	...	0	6
" £2 " £4 ...	...	...	...	...	1	0
" £4 " £6 ...	...	...	...	...	1	6
" £6 " £8 ...	...	...	...	...	2	0
" £8 " £10 ...	...	...	...	...	3	0
" £10 " £12 ...	...	...	...	...	4	0

We further advise that the above rates be extended to Cape Colony, which country has intimated its desire for a reduction in the present charges.

6. *Postal Union Congress.*

This matter has been dealt with in special report relating to the Washington Congress.

10. *Question of apportioning between the Australasian Colonies the cost of future Conferences.*

Whilst we consider this to be a question more for Ministers than ourselves to deal with, we respectfully venture to express the opinion that the practice of the colony in which the Conference is held bearing the expense is the more desirable one. The first departure from the above practice was in the case of the Hobart Conference of 1895; but the circumstances were exceptional.

As it has been decided that these Intercolonial Conferences are to be held every year, the expenses need not, in our judgment, be necessarily very great.

11. *Question of the Colonies adopting a single sum, in lieu of existing rates, as their share of postage on parcels received via the United Kingdom, from European countries.*

The present Colonial share of postage on parcels from certain foreign countries via the United Kingdom is,—

Not exceeding 2 lb ...	...	...	...	...	s.	d.
Between 2 lb. and 7 lb. ...	...	...	...	...	0	9
Between 7 lb. and 11 lb. ...	...	...	...	...	2	3
Between 11 lb. and 15 lb. ...	...	...	...	...	3	9

We recommend that, in lieu of these rates, the Colonies accept a sum of 2s. 6d. per parcel, light or heavy, up to 11 lb. in weight, as their share of postage on parcels received from countries which may adopt the principle of a uniform postage per parcel.

12. *Respecting the reduction and apportionment of postage on parcels exchanged between the United Kingdom and Australasia.*

This matter has recently been settled by correspondence. The rates of postage have been reduced to 1s. for the first lb., and 6d. for each additional lb. to 11 lb., the Colonial share thereof being 7d. and 3d. respectively.

13. *Question of allowing the "Objects of the Meeting" to be stated in writing in Notices of Meetings transmitted by post at packet rate.*

We recommend that this be allowed intercolonially.

15. *Money Order Telegrams.*

We recommend that the proposal of New Zealand to introduce the Telegraph Money Order System between that Colony and Australia and Tasmania be agreed to. Our experience of the system which is now in force between the Australian Colonies and Tasmania does not lead us to anticipate that any serious risk would be incurred by extending it to New Zealand.

We advise that the usual money order commissions be charged, plus the cost of a ten word telegraph message to the paying office, and another to the payee.

16. *Parcels Post Convention with France.*

In 1894 the London Office forwarded to the several Colonial Offices copies of a draft Convention and detailed regulations, prepared by France, for an exchange of parcels with Australia.

The proposed Convention and regulations relating thereto were considered at the Hobart (1895) Conference, and the Permanent Heads made the following report and recommendations; viz. :—

“34. Parcel Post Convention with France.

“In July last the London Post Office informed the Colonies that the French Post Office desired a direct exchange of parcels between France and Australia by the French Mail Steamers (Messageries Maritimes), and, the proposal having been approved of by the Home Authorities, forwarded a draft Convention and regulations for the consideration of the Colonies.

“We have considered the draft submitted, and recommend that its provisions be agreed to, but that the following suggestions be made :—

“Article 6. That no fee for portorage and for the execution of Customs formalities be collected in the Colonies from the addressees of parcels from France.

“Article 14. That the introduction of the system of acknowledgment of delivery of parcels remain in abeyance until the system be adopted generally.

“Regulation 2. That the postage progress pound by pound, instead of in steps of 2 lb., 7 lb., 11 lb.; as more consistent with the Colonial and English practice.

“Regulation 6.—3. That the Customs declaration forms be drawn up in the English language, and bear a sublineary translation in French, as is done with Postal Union forms.

“Regulation 8.—3. That the provision that mails ‘be landed, as far as possible, at the Custom House’ be omitted as unnecessary, as Customs work is done at the Post Offices.

“That it be provided that the cost of receptacles be shared equally between the countries of exchange.

“Regulation 12. That in lieu of this a simple regulation providing for the preparation of a quarterly account, and for the payment of the balance due as early as possible after the same has been ascertained be substituted.”

And at a meeting held in Adelaide, in July, 1895, of representatives from the Postal Departments of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, the matter received further attention, and was reported on as follows :—

“The London Office, in a letter dated 22nd April, 1895, submits a proposal from the French Office suggesting an addition to Article 1, as follows :—

“2. The Post Offices of the two countries shall later on be at liberty, if their regulations allow, to mutually fix rates and conditions for insured and ‘collection’ parcels.

“We see no objection to this addition, as it is purely permissive, and does not impose new conditions.

“Article 10.—We advise that this Article, which provides for indemnity up to 15 or 25 francs in the case of loss of, or damage to, parcels, be expunged. We find that in the Report of Permanent Heads submitted to the Hobart Conference, a recommendation to the above effect was omitted, although the Australasian Offices were unanimously in favour of omitting the clause in question.”

The recommendations of the Hobart Conference were communicated to the London Office, and a reply was received from that Office, stating that the principal suggestions of such Conference had been communicated to the French Post Office, and intimating :—

Articles 6 and 14.—That as these Articles are purely permissive, no alteration of the Convention is necessary.

Regulation 2.—That the French Post Office has no objection to the postage rates on parcels from Australia progressing pound by pound, and pointing out that if the postage on parcels exchanged between the United Kingdom and Australia be reduced (as has since been done), a similar reduction will, under Article 3 of the draft Convention, have to be made in the postage on parcels exchanged between France and Australia.

Regulations 6 and 8.—That in view of the explanations furnished, these regulations might stand as printed.

Regulation 12.—This regulation has been amended to meet the views of the Colonies.

Cost of Receptacles.—An assurance is given that there will be no difficulty in making satisfactory arrangements on this subject.

These proposals met with the concurrence of the Sydney and Adelaide Offices. The latter Office communicated with the other Colonies on the subject, and it was ultimately decided that the matter be considered at this Conference.

We recommend that the draft Convention as amended be agreed to, and that the Colonial share of postage on parcels from France be fixed at 2s. 1d. (2 francs 50 centimes) up to 3 kilogrammes (7 lb.), and 3s. 1d. (3 francs 70 centimes) between 3 and 5 kilogrammes (11 lb.); and the postage on parcels from Australia to France, Algeria, and Corsica might be :—

	To France.		To Algeria and Corsica.	
	s.	d.	s.	d.
Not exceeding 1 lb.	3	6	3	8½
Between 1 lb. and 2 lb.	3	9	3	11½
Between 2 lb. and 3 lb.	4	0	4	2½
Between 3 lb. and 4 lb.	4	3	4	5½
Between 4 lb. and 5 lb.	4	6	4	8½
Between 5 lb. and 6 lb.	4	9	4	11½
Between 6 lb. and 7 lb.	5	0	5	2½
Between 7 lb. and 8 lb.	5	3	5	5½
Between 8 lb. and 9 lb.	5	6	5	8½
Between 9 lb. and 10 lb.	5	9	5	11½
Between 10 lb. and 11 lb.	6	0	6	2½

19. *Universal Reply Letter-cards.*

The sale of reply post-cards in the Australasian Colonies is very limited, and it is evident that the great body of the public prefer to transact their correspondence by means of ordinary sealed letters (employing their own material for the purpose), which permits them to communicate at greater length than would be possible by means of letter-cards.

It is probable that a larger number of reply letter-cards would be received from Union countries than would be despatched hence, which would entail loss of revenue on the Colonies; but even were the number of reply letter-cards in both directions to be equal, the general or an extensive use of reply letter-cards by the public of the Colonies would cause a diminution of postal receipts.

For these reasons we are not favourable to the exchange of reply letter-cards with Postal Union countries.

Letter-card System.

We are not favourably impressed with the letter-card system, unless the postage can be made equal to letter rate. The revenue suffers by conveying them at a lower rate, and the postal departments are put to the expense of manufacturing the cards. Moreover the rates in the Colonies are not uniform being as follows:—

New South Wales and New Zealand	1½d. each
Victoria and Queensland	2d. „

The system is not in operation in South Australia, Tasmania, or Western Australia.

20. *Re-arrangement of the division of postage on intercolonial parcels.*

Queensland proposes that, as regards parcels exchanged between New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and South Australia, the postage of 8d. for the first pound, and 6d. for each additional pound should be equally divided, namely:—Despatching Office, 4d. for first pound, 3d. each additional pound; Receiving Office, 4d. for first pound, 3d. each additional pound; but that the division of postage on parcels exchanged between the above-named Colonies and New Zealand, Tasmania, and Western Australia should remain as at present, “because in their case a sea rate has to be paid, and the number of parcels exchanged is small in both directions.”

It is the practice, in exchanges of parcels between British Colonies, to allow each office of despatch a sufficient sum to cover cost of transmission to destination, and to equally divide the balance of postage between the two offices of exchange. This is the principle at present in operation between the Australasian Colonies, the postage on parcels exchanged being divided as follows, namely:—

Despatching office, 5d. for first lb.; 4d. each additional lb.

Receiving office, 3d. for first lb.; 2d. each additional lb.; the additional 2d. per lb. allowed to the office of despatch being intended to cover cost of transmission by sea or rail to destination.

The Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide offices have been in correspondence on the subject, and we would point out that one of the objects of the Australasian Colonies for some years past has been to secure uniformity between themselves in postal matters, but the adoption of the Queensland proposal would disturb the uniformity in division of postage at present existing between the Colonies, and establish two entirely different modes of apportioning such postage. After considering the matter we advise that a decision be deferred.

TELEGRAPH MATTERS.

7. *Telegraph Code, Alteration of.*

The use by New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Queensland of a code which differs from that in use in New Zealand, Western Australia, and the rest of the world (America only excepted) is undesirable.

The adoption of the uniform code, as fixed by the International Telegraphic Bureau, is preferable. The Colonies are further bound by their membership with that bureau to adopt this code.

The only objection to the alteration is the risk of error on the first introduction of a new code. It is considered that the change can be made with a minimum of inconvenience by dating it from the first of July next.

We therefore recommend its adoption from that date.

8. *Code Addresses.*

We recommend,—(1) That code addresses be not adopted intercolonially, except in the case of Tasmania and New Zealand, which for this purpose are international.

(2) That in connection with international messages code surnames be not accepted.

9. *Reply-paid Telegrams.*

No report to make.

11. *Reduction of Intercolonial Telegraph Rates.*

We refrain from making any recommendation. We would, however, suggest for the consideration of Ministers that in the event of an alteration of the rates being made, it should be on the basis of the International principle of counting addresses and signatures, as recommended at the Conferences held in Adelaide and Sydney, in 1890 and 1891, respectively.

18. *Consideration of Mr. Jules Renard's letter respecting Telephonic Communication between the capitals of Australia.*

This is a matter that requires careful consideration. The first cost would be more than double Mr. Renard's estimate for connecting Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, and the charge that would have to be made for conversation would be so large as to be almost prohibitory. The population of the Colonies is not sufficiently developed to enable an expensive work of this nature to be carried out so as to be remunerative at a reasonable charge to the public.

The line from Brisbane to Sydney alone would cost £41,750, or presuming that the existing poles could be used (which is impracticable) the estimate might be reduced to £24,250.

Even making no allowance for maintenance of the line or for working expenses, the interest and sinking fund on a 15 years' purchase is 10 per cent. of the capital cost (really £9 12s. 8d. per cent.) Therefore, for the line to be justifiable, a revenue of £4,175 will require to be guaranteed on the Brisbane and Sydney line alone. It must also be borne in mind that telephonic communication between the capital cities of Australia would materially interfere with the telegraph revenue.

We are, therefore, not prepared to recommend Mr. Renard's proposal for favourable consideration.

S. H. LAMBTON.
C. TODD.
JOHN McDONNELL.

General Post Office,
Sydney, 19 November, 1896.

REPORT BY PERMANENT HEADS OF NEW SOUTH WALES AND SOUTH AUSTRALIA ONLY.

17. *Intention of Queensland to rescind, so far as that Colony is concerned, so much of Article 12 of the Australasian Postal Convention as relates to the admission of merchandise to the packet post; and*

21. *Charges intended to be levied by Queensland on Intercolonial newspapers.*

These two subjects are brought forward, as Queensland has notified its intention of withdrawing from those provisions of the Australasian Convention which refer to the transmission, intercolonially, of small packets up to 1 lb. in weight, and of requiring all such packets containing merchandise, other than samples, to be sent by parcel post only. The great objection we see to this is that it restricts the sending of small packets to those offices only to which the parcel post system extends, and besides this, whilst small packets can now be sent at 1d. per 2 oz., the public would have to pay a minimum postage of 8d., however small the value and weight of the packet. The reasons assigned by Queensland for this action are; that "there are obvious objections to the exchange of merchandise intercolonially as packets." "In most instances," it is stated, "the enclosures in such packets are dutiable, and as the declaration of value is not compulsory, it is often difficult to correctly assess the value of the goods enclosed, for Custom's purposes. It is also considered that dutiable articles can be more readily dealt with if confined to one channel, and the use of the packet post limited, as in the case of the Universal Postal Union, to *bonâ fide* samples and patterns having no value beyond their mere use as trade samples or patterns. There is also a serious objection to the transmission of articles of value by packet post because such packets cannot be traced."

The present practice of permitting articles of value to be exchanged by packet post between the Australasian Colonies has been in operation for many years past, and to deprive the public of a privilege which they have so long been permitted to enjoy, and in its place to substitute a system which (to them) will, in most instances, be more troublesome and costly, will no doubt be looked upon as a hardship and give cause for complaint. Moreover, the policy of the times seems to be to grant increased postal facilities to the public where practicable instead of curtailing those already existing.

The maximum weight of an Intercolonial packet is 1 lb., the postage being at the rate of 1d. per 2 oz., whereas the minimum postage on an Intercolonial parcel is 8d. It will thus be seen that the Queensland proposal is of a very restrictive character, as packets containing articles of trifling value, often sent as presents, on which no Customs duty would perhaps be payable, and which can now be forwarded for 1d. or 2d., will, in future, if the Brisbane office adheres to its determination, be subject to a postage of 8d., which seems unreasonable.

Moreover, it is thought that the Australasian Postal administrations will be put to considerable trouble in examining the contents of packets addressed to Queensland for the purpose of ascertaining whether merchandise is enclosed therein, and in taking the necessary action where such is enclosed to transfer such articles to the parcel post. Further, the uniformity in postal matters for which the Colonies have so long been labouring will again be retarded.

With regard to subject No. 21, Queensland intimates its intention to charge $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per 2 oz. in lieu of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per 10 oz. (as at present fixed by the Australasian Convention) on newspapers for other Colonies, and to surcharge at double the deficient postage those addressed to Queensland which are not prepaid at the higher rate; also to exclude from transmission at the rate of 1d. per lb. bulk parcels of newspapers.

We regret that the Queensland Post Office has seen fit to withdraw from the Convention in respect of these matters, as we consider the existing rates are fairly reasonable. It is well known that nearly all of the daily and all the weekly newspapers considerably exceed 2 oz. in weight, and we think it would be unwise to impose so high a rate upon them.

We therefore advise that Queensland be asked to reconsider these questions.

We also take this opportunity of bringing under Ministers' notice the fact that the Queensland Post Office has further notified that from the 1st January, 1897, newspapers received from other Colonies will not be delivered if they contain any advertisements relating to sweeps, consultations, or indecent advertisements.

S. H. LAMBTON.
C. TODD.

General Post Office,
Sydney, 19 November, 1896.

(Name of Colony.)

LETTER BILL No.....

Showing the contents of the Mail from, despatched *Overland*;

addressed to.....

No.....Bags—(including.....registered articles and.....Money Order packets).

FORWARD MAILS, DESPATCHED AS FOLLOWS:—

[illegible]

(a) Number of letters contained in mails for onward transit by sea from.....to be inserted.

(b) *Weight of mail matter* contained in mails for onward transit *by sea* from.....to be inserted.

Despatching Officer.

RECEIVED at the day of 189 .

Receiving Officer:

NOTE.—It is requested that this Bill be signed, dated, and returned to the General Post Office,.....by the first opportunity.

APPENDIX (2.)

Date Stamp of
Despatching Office.

(Name of Colony.)

LETTER BILL No.....

Showing the contents of the Mail from.....despatched per.....,

addressed to.....

No. Bags—(including.....registered articles and.....Money Order packets).

FORWARD MAILS, DESPATCHED AS FOLLOWS:—

[illegible]

(a) Number of letters contained in mails for onward transit by sea from.....to be inserted.

(b) *Weight of mail matter* contained in mails for onward transit *by sea* from.....to be inserted.

Despatching Officer.

Received at the day of 189 .

Receiving Officer.

NOTE.—It is requested that this Bill be signed, dated, and returned to the General Post Office,, by the first opportunity.

REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS.

SATURDAY, 14 NOVEMBER, 1896.

The Conference met at 10.15 a.m.

The Hon. Mr. COOK was elected President, and Mr. DALGARNO Secretary.

It was agreed, without formal motion, that the Press should not be admitted, at least while the mail tenders were being considered.

The Hon. Mr. COOK, in returning thanks for his election as President, gave a hearty welcome to the Delegates, and said the questions they had to decide were of particular importance. First, there was the question of the acceptance of tenders for the conveyance of mails to and from England; and the other matter was the very important question of whether they should be represented at the Washington Congress or not. He confessed that on looking into this last matter it had assumed more importance in his mind than it did before. However, before they finished they would decide whether they would be represented, and, if so, how many ought to go. To his mind, the main question was that of the mail tenders—that was by far the most important matter to settle. The question was whether the Colonies should submit to the terms and conditions offered in the tenders or not, and perhaps it would be as well to at once consider it. He was exceedingly glad to see the Delegates present, and hoped to try and make their stay as pleasant as possible.

THE WASHINGTON CONGRESS.

The Hon. Mr. COOK read and laid upon the Table lists of subjects it was proposed to bring before the Congress at Washington. [*See Appendices A and B.*]

Sir CHARLES TODD: There will be a further list from Berne.

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN: Is it too late now to make suggestions?

Mr. LAMBTON explained that all suggestions should have been sent in in time to reach Berne by 1st October; but it having been pointed out that this could not possibly be done, a reply was received from Berne, stating that the suggestions from Australasia would be placed in the form of a supplementary agenda paper and circulated amongst the Delegates.

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN: Do we send in our separate proposals?

Mr. LAMBTON: Oh no; it is for the Ministers here to decide what are to be the subjects for consideration, and how the representative is to vote on them.

The Hon. Mr. COOK: I was going to suggest that perhaps we might refer these matters to the permanent heads for report, to consider this special list of eight proposals; and such others as they can find they can deal with in the absence of the permanent heads of other Colonies.

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN: Those of urgency.

The Hon. Mr. COOK: Any question they find they can deal with.

Mr. LAMBTON produced the agenda paper of the Washington Conference (just received) and explained it had not yet been translated.

The SECRETARY read a letter from Berne, dated 5th October, forwarding a portion of the agenda paper.

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM said he would like to see included the question of the adoption, inter-colonially, of a uniform telegraphic code.

Mr. LAMBTON: I have it here.

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM: We have the international system in West Australia.

The Hon. Mr. COOK: The matter is referred to here, "Telegraph Code, alteration of."

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM: Each Delegate should be placed in possession of a copy of the subjects we are asked to consider.

The Hon. Mr. COOK: That will be done when the permanent heads bring in their report.

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM: And in the meantime we can ascertain the views of our Governments, where the questions are not ones of mere detail.

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN: Mr. Wittenoom means to have beforehand, as soon as possible, some idea of the subjects to be reported upon by the permanent heads, and asks that, as soon as they have decided, you send round to each of us a list of the matters that will be discussed, and if any of us wish to communicate with our Governments we can do so.

The Hon. Mr. COOK: Yes, that is right.

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN then moved,—“That the list of subjects to be dealt with by the Conference read by the President be referred to the permanent heads, who are requested to add to the list any other matters of sufficient importance and urgency to be included in the list, and as soon as the list has been prepared that a copy of the subjects for discussion be sent round to each Delegate.”

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY seconded the motion, which was carried.

It was decided, without formal motion, that the Ministerial Delegates should go into committee to consider the question of the mail tenders; and the other members of the Conference and shorthand-writer withdrew.

On the motion of the Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM, seconded by the Hon. Mr. DUFFY, the Conference then adjourned till Thursday at 10 a.m.

THURSDAY,

THURSDAY, 19 NOVEMBER, 1896.

The Conference resumed at 2:50 p.m.

The minutes of the previous sitting were read and confirmed.

The Hon. Mr. Cook: We had better proceed first to have the report of the permanent heads.

Mr. Lambton, upon being called on by the Chairman, submitted the reports from the permanent heads on the questions of the ocean mail service, the Washington Congress, and the list of matters of importance and urgency selected by them for the consideration of the Conference, as per Appendix B.

The Hon. Mr. Cook: We had better deal with the Washington proposals first, I think. Shall we take the proposals *seriatim* or not?

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY: *Seriatim*.

Mr. Lambton then proceeded to read the report on representation at the Washington Postal Union Congress in May, 1897.

On section 2, "Reduction of Sea Transit Rates," being read,—

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY asked: What would the effect be as regards Australia?

Sir CHARLES TODD: It will be to our advantage.

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN: Our sea transit rates are for mostly over 3,500 miles, and those remain at the maximum rate.

Sir CHARLES TODD: We would still gain. It is all in our favour.

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN: It is practically raising the rates.

Sir CHARLES TODD: No; it will reduce the rates for the shorter distances.

On section 4, "Re indemnity for the loss of registered articles," being read,—

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY said: That does not affect us.

Mr. LAMBTON: It affects Queensland.

The Hon. Mr. COOK: This clause limits the amount payable.

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN: It commits us up to that limitation. Why should we bother about this?

Sir CHARLES TODD: Some countries admit the principle, and we may all be forced into it ultimately, and compelled to recognise it.

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN: Is not the time when they seek to enforce this the time to make the stipulation? It could be construed into a precedent.

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM: Does not this proposal come from West Australia?

Mr. LAMBTON: And Queensland and New Zealand, too.

On section 5, "Use of stamp,—Postage paid," being reached,—

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN remarked: We insist on stamps in all cases.

Sir CHARLES TODD: Some Colonies do not.

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM: You do not collect anything on them in your colony?

Sir CHARLES TODD: Oh, yes, we do! We send in our accounts, but in some Colonies payment is made by a lump sum.

After the reading of the recommendations of the permanent heads of departments had been concluded,—

The Hon. Mr. COOK asked: Is there anything to take exception to in that Report?

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM moved,—“That the Report be adopted, subject to such additions and amendments as may be forwarded by the Colonies previous to the departure of the Australasian Delegate for Washington.”

Seconded by the Hon. Mr. THYNNE, and carried.

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM asked whether any letter had been received from the Postmaster-General of Western Australia, embodying any suggestions he had to make to this Conference.

Mr. LAMBTON: Yes; and they have been included and provided for.

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY: Have you dealt with the Victorian suggestions?

Mr. LAMBTON: Yes.

Mr. LAMBTON then read a further report from the permanent heads on matters of importance and urgency for consideration by the Conference. (*See Appendix.*)

Section 16, "Parcel Post Convention with France."

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY: What would be the effect of this monetarily?

Mr. LAMBTON: We have no Convention now.

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY: Is there any prospect of anything being done under it?

Mr. LAMBTON: Yes.

The Hon. Mr. COOK: I understand Mr. Duffy wants to know, has France agreed to the proposal?

Mr. LAMBTON: Yes, practically.

Section 7, "Alteration of Telegraph Code"

The Hon. Mr. COOK: I understand there are only eleven letters different in the International code and the code we use.

Sir CHARLES TODD: Eleven, and figures as well. New Zealand, Tasmania, West Australia, and the Cable Co. use the International code.

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM: Could not the change be made on the 1st of March?

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN: Let it stand at the 1st July.

Section 22, "Electric Light and Power Regulations."

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY: We want an Act first. We cannot have regulations before an Act is passed.

The Hon. Mr. COOK: Victoria already has an Act dealing with the matter. The best plan seems to me for each colony to get its Act first, and then try and frame regulations.

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY: We could not well alter our regulations in any material particular just as we are starting the thing.

Sir CHARLES TODD: We should have uniform regulations.

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY: I do not see you can do anything till you have passed your Acts.

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM: No harm can come from suggesting draft regulations.

The Hon. Mr. THYNNE: If the electrical men here draft regulations they could submit them to Mr. Cook.

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN: Leave out the request for uniformity.

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY: Our electrical man is not represented at all. It is intended to submit the matter to those present.

The

The Hon. Mr. THYNNE: We hope to have our Act through this Session, and regulations ready to put in force; but we want to have a standard set, with the help of the other colonies. If this be done, it will greatly assist those colonies which have no Acts yet.

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM: If the electrical experts draft a set of regulations, we can submit them to our electrical representatives.

The Hon. Mr. THYNNE: They could be sent to each Government.

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM: It seems to me a very reasonable proposal. Let it stand.

The Hon. Mr. COOK: The object to be gained is uniformity of action. Mr. Duffy objects.

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY: We have our Act, and are not on the same plane.

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM: The draft regulations would be only permissive. We are not bound to accept them.

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN: Let the experts go on with it.

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM: It seems to me we would get a basis to go on.

Mr. LAMBTON read a report, signed by himself and Sir Charles Todd, Mr. McDonnell dissenting, on the subject of the proposal of Queensland to rescind, so far as that Colony is concerned, so much of Article 12 of the Australasian Convention as relates to the admission of merchandise to the packet post, and proposed charge on intercolonial newspapers.

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN: I would like to see the provision about prohibiting newspapers with advertisements relating to sweeps carried out everywhere.

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM: It seems a pity to break away from the uniformity.

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY: I do not know what the Queensland representative has to say in support of the clause about newspapers.

The Hon. Mr. COOK: What about packets?

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY: It is intercolonial newspapers I am thinking of more. I do not see any excuse for the proposal.

The Hon. Mr. THYNNE: It makes a considerable difference to us. The Australasian Postal Convention was accepted by different Colonies with varying conditions. Victoria, as a result, treats magazines as newspapers.

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY: You are trying to shut out the *Town and Country*, *Australasian*, and *Leader*.

The Hon. Mr. THYNNE: We are forced to take this action to protect ourselves. Victoria is not bound by the Convention of 1894, and that Colony treats magazines and catalogues as newspapers. The other Colonies are flooding us with these books at newspaper rates.

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM: Is your Government going to insist on this?

The Hon. Mr. THYNNE: I understand so.

The Hon. Mr. COOK did not think it would make much difference to Queensland to yield on the points in question. The distinction sought to be made in regard to small packets was most invidious, and the reasons assigned for it were, in his opinion, most inadequate. When they were trying to establish better relations between the Colonies, a small amount of money should not be allowed to enter into their considerations. He strongly urged that Queensland should reconsider these matters.

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY moved,—“That the Queensland Government be asked to reconsider the proposal to rescind, as far as that Colony is concerned, so much of Article 12 of the Australasian Convention as relates to the admission of merchandise to the Packet Post, and also the charges intended to be levied by Queensland on intercolonial newspapers.”

Seconded by the Hon. Dr. COCKBURN and carried.

The Hon. Mr. COOK: I convey the resolution to you, Mr. Thynne, with the greatest heartiness.

The Hon. Mr. THYNNE: Undoubtedly I will bring the matter under the consideration of my colleagues; but still I would like to see the other Colonies give an example of better federal spirit.

The report of the permanent heads on the matters of urgency and importance to be considered by the Conference, after discussion and with consent, was, as revised, adopted.

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY moved,—“That a Minister of the Crown, controlling a post office if possible, to be accompanied by Mr. James Smibert, Deputy Postmaster-General of Victoria, as postal expert, attend the Washington Congress as representative of Australasia.” Mr. Smibert was retiring at the end of the year, and having done a great deal of good work in regard to postal matters not only for Victoria, but for the whole of Australasia, it would be a graceful wind-up to his career.

Seconded by the Hon. Dr. COCKBURN and carried.

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM: What about the election of delegate?

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN: That will be arranged by the different Governments.

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM: I suppose the initiatory steps will be taken by the New South Wales Government?

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN: Yes.

The Hon. Mr. WITTENOOM said: As the youngest and newest delegate to the Postal Conference he found the privilege had fallen to him to propose a vote of thanks to the President, who had so well conducted the business of the Conference. Important issues had been raised, which would have effects in after times in the Colonies connected with them, and their deliberations had been carried on in such a manner that those issues would be creditable to the different Colonies. The utmost good feeling had prevailed, and he was gratified to find the amicable manner in which the various matters had been approached. They had to express their thanks for the hospitable and generous manner in which the Government of this Colony, through Mr. Cook, had treated them. They had been enabled to combine business with pleasure, and they would all remember with pleasure their visit to Sydney, which was well known for its hospitality. He trusted Mr. Cook would be long spared to continue in his present position and to preside over many another Conference. He moved,—“That the thanks of the Conference be accorded to Mr. Cook.”

Seconded by the Hon. Mr. THYNNE and carried.

On the motion of the Hon. Dr. COCKBURN, seconded by the Hon. Mr. DUFFY, a vote of thanks was passed to Mr. Dalgarno for his services as Secretary, and those Ministers hurriedly left to catch the Express for Melbourne.

The Honorable Mr. Cook then intimated to the Secretary that the Ministers had drafted a cablegram to The Right Honorable the Postmaster-General, London, *re* Federal Mail Service, and desired its immediate transmission.