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T A S M A N I A.  
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

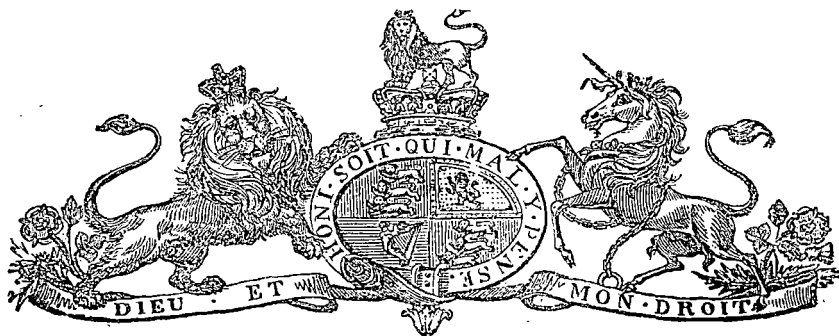
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TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION WITH  
AUSTRALIA.

DESPATCH.

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Laid on the Table by Mr. Whyte, and ordered by the Council to be printed,  
September 15, 1863.



CIRCULAR.  
TASMANIA.

Downing-street, 16th July, 1863.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to transmit to you copies of communications of the dates noted in the margin, which have been addressed to this Department by Mr. G. S. Walters, the Agent-General for South Australia in this country, respecting the establishment of Telegraphic communication with the Australian Continent.

Mr. Walters,  
24 Feb., 1863.  
26 Feb., 1863.  
19 Mar., 1863.  
26 Mar., 1863.

I also enclose for your information copy of a letter from the Board of Treasury in reply to the reference which was made on the subject to that Department; and in conformity with their Lordships' suggestions, I have to instruct you to consult with your Responsible Advisers as to the expediency of Representatives being appointed by the different Governments concerned to meet together and discuss the question in all its bearings.

24 June, 1863.

I have the honor to be,  
Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

NEWCASTLE.

Governor GORE BROWNE, C.B.

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Mr. WALTERS to the DUKE OF NEWCASTLE.

Office of Agent-General for South Australia,  
5, Copthall Court, London, E.C., 24th February, 1863.

MY LORD,

I HAVE understood that application is likely to be made to Her Majesty's Government to give a guarantee for a Telegraphic cable to be laid down from East Java to Queensland.

In consequence of the recent explorations to the North Coast of the Australian Continent by South Australian explorers, the views of the Government and people of South Australia appear to be already extending themselves across the Continent, as will be better shown by the copy of a letter from the Treasury at Adelaide addressed to me under date 26th December, 1862, which I have now the honor to enclose for Your Grace's perusal.

I infer from this Despatch that the local Government of South Australia is not prepared to subscribe to any plan to be submitted to Her Majesty's Government through Queensland, if any such should be offered, inasmuch as the expense of communication would be immensely reduced by a simple overland Telegraph wire across the Continent to meet a much shorter cable wire at the point most convenient, or contiguous to Java.

Inquiries are already set in movement by the Telegraph authorities at Adelaide with reference to iron pillars for supporting the wire *en route*, from which I apprehend they consider that any difficulties which might be supposed to arise from any of the aborigines, if such there be, could be easily overcome.

I thus place the matter so far as it happens to have come to my knowledge under Your Grace's view in case it should form an interesting element of consideration.

I may also add, that I don't think Her Majesty's Government of South Australia will allow themselves to be drawn into any unnecessary extravagant expenditure for the benefit of speculators.

If I err in addressing Your Grace I have no doubt you will pardon me.

I have, &c.,  
(Signed) G. S. WALTERS.

To His Grace the DUKE OF NEWCASTLE, K.G.

*Mr. BLYTH to Mr. WALTERS.*

*Treasury Offices, Adelaide, 26th December, 1863.*

SIR,

I HAVE the pleasure to announce that Mr. John M'Douall Stuart has recently returned to Adelaide from his third attempt to reach the Indian Ocean overland, a feat at last happily accomplished at a point a little to the eastward of Cape Hoïham in Van Diemen's Gulf.

A copy of his journal and map describing his course of travel to and from the Northern Coast of this Continent are posted to you herewith; and you will be gratified to learn that the northern region passed through by Mr. Stuart is eminently adapted for settlement, and that efforts will be made to secure its addition to South (or more properly Central) Australia.

Under any circumstances, Van Diemen's Gulf will doubtless prove an important outlet for disposing of the surplus stock of this province in the Indian and Chinese markets. Perhaps, too, the Telegraphic wire may connect Adelaide with Europe and Asia, at no very distant day, by Mr. Stuart's route.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) ARTHUR BLYTH, *Treasurer.*

G. S. WALTERS, *Esq., S. A. Agent-General, London.*

*Mr. WALTERS to the DUKE OF NEWCASTLE.*

*Office of Agent-General for South Australia,  
5, Copthall Court, London, 26th February, 1863.*

MY LORD,

I HAD the honor of addressing Your Grace on the 24th instant, on the subject of the scheme for laying down the Telegraph wire to the Australasian Colonies, which I understand is to be propounded to the Treasury.

Since then I have made some hasty inquiries, and the result, which at present is somewhat crude, is embodied in the enclosed letter from a practical telegraphist, Mr. Passmore, to myself.

Her Majesty's Government will, I doubt not, open the line to public competition; and it is to be hoped that the Dutch Government will not mar such a proceeding by granting to any person the exclusive permission to land Sub-marine Cables on their Island.

I have no desire to appear further in this matter, or to trouble Your Grace upon it.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) G. S. WALTERS, *Agent-General.*

*His Grace the DUKE OF NEWCASTLE, K.G.*

*Mr. PASSMORE to Mr. WALTERS.*

*90, Cannon-street, London, 26th February, 1863.*

DEAR SIR,

WITH reference to our conversation of this morning, I think it is highly important that the Government should well consider the various routes before committing itself to any scheme for 'Telegraphic' communication with the Australian Colonies.

Mr. Gisborne's scheme is for a Submarine Line from East Java to Moreton Bay, a distance of 3024 knots, at an estimated outlay of £1,000,000.

Since that scheme was originated, Mr. Stuart has crossed the continent three times, planting a flag on the North Coast, near Cambridge Gulf; and he reports most favourably of the major part of the country, which he has now traversed three years consecutively.

The country is being speedily occupied, and everything tends to prove the practicability of a *Land-Line* across the Continent, with a Submarine Line to East Java.

What I should suggest as a proposal to be made (without going into detail) would stand thus; viz.—

Submarine Cable from North Coast to East Java.....	940 miles.
Land Section.....	1480 miles.
Total .....	2420 miles.

A report and estimate of the cost of this Cable and Land Line has been prepared; and it may be relied

on, I think, that it could be completed for under £500,000, or for one half the cost of Mr. Gisborne's scheme, with a saving of 1000 miles in the length of Sea Line.

It should be suggested to the Dutch Government to grant no exclusive concession for the landing of Cables in the Island of Java.

I am, &c.,  
(Signed) WM. B. PASSMORE.

G. S. WALTERS, *Esq.*, *Agent-General for South Australia.*

P.S.—If Mr. Gisborne alters his plan, and proposes to carry his Submarine Cable from East Java to the Gulf of Carpentaria only, being a distance of 1855 miles, at the diminished cost of £710,000, then I would suggest, as against this proposal, that the Cable be carried to a nearer point on the North Coast, distance only 940 miles, and at a cost of £235,000, thus saving 915 miles of Sea Line and £475,000 of money.

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*Mr. WALTERS to SIR F. ROGERS.*

*Office of Agent-General for South Australia,  
5, Cophall Court, 19th March, 1863.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge your letter of the 16th instant.

The kind expressions of His Grace the Duke of Newcastle embolden me to bring to a conclusion what I am desirous of saying with respect to Telegraph communication with the Australian Colonies, after having made further enquiry.

1. Let me restate that I was impelled to address His Grace from the urgency of the moment, as I perceived that a number of respected colonists had consented to accompany Mr. Gisborne to the Chancellor of the Exchequer,—the object of Mr. Gisborne being, as I believed, to promote one or other of his two schemes, both of which appeared to me most undesirable in the interests of Her Majesty's Government, and of every one of the Colonies.

2. And for the following reasons:—That on the first scheme of about 3000 miles (nautical), to cost about a million sterling, no less than about 2000 miles might be saved;

That on the second scheme of about 2000 nautical miles of cable, to cost about £710,000, 1000 miles might be saved;

That on the calculated price of about £380 per nautical mile, about £150 more or less might be saved;

That the *amount* of saving in both cases might reach an enormous sum, say almost half a million in round numbers in either case, if the alternative were adopted of landing the cable at the nearest point from Timor, and carrying thence a land line to about the same latitude as Moreton Bay.

3. This prospect appeared to me to require a pause in the proceedings, since assuredly it would be to the interest of Her Majesty's Government and of all the Colonies to direct an investigation to be made by competent persons. On public grounds alone, and in the urgency of the moment, I deemed it my duty to address the Duke.

4. It is reported that at the interview with Mr. Gisborne and the gentlemen who accompanied him, the Chancellor of the Exchequer hinted, that the payment of money for the cable in lieu of guaranteeing interest might be a preferable course. If so, and the Colonies adopt the same view, I am firmly persuaded, bearing in recollection the unfortunate results of the Red Sea Cable, that such in effect would be the right course, and the most economical; for the contract could then be made direct with responsible manufacturers, upon the true and equitable footing, and save the absorption by any intermediate persons of so large a sum as £150 (more or less) per nautical mile in the price of the cable.

5. As the result of my further enquiry, I beg permission to enclose copies of a more complete letter from Mr. Passmore, the telegraph contractor, and of an additional letter from Mr. C. F. Varley, the engineer and electrician, whose authority as a man of great practical experience and of high scientific standing in the Electrical world is sufficiently notorious.

The character of both gentlemen for integrity and honour is of no slight moment in considering their evidence. Mr. Varley has under his charge the whole of the electric and international telegraph system, comprising some 35,000 miles of land wire, and 1800 miles of sea cable wire, all working in perfect order with hundreds of thousands of messages. These copies I have had printed for transmission to the Colonies.

6. In connection *with the feasibility* of land wires across the Australasian Continent, and the *truthfulness* of the descriptions of Stuart, the South Australian explorer, and his well known companions, I may refer to

the annexed extracts of private letters by the mail just arrived, showing the confidence of the South Australian colonists in both, and "that they know not only how to discover, but how to occupy," as their journals say.

The colonists of South Australia are losing no time in sending sheep and cattle upon Stuart's route, and even are agitating the propriety of sending a superintendent and staff to the Northern sea-board for the maintenance of order.

7. Perhaps it might be suggested that the time is arrived, or nearly so, when all the Australasian Colonies should depute, say, the chiefs of their respective telegraph systems, to form a congress and determine:—

- a. The best point on the Northern Coast for laying the cable.
- b. The most convenient point for all, to which the land line should be directed from the Coast, so as to enable each Colony to derive from this latter land line point the communications for each Colony.
- c. The best mode of purchasing the cable, &c., and maintenance, &c.
- d. The division of costs (including New Zealand, Tasmania, and Western Australia).

8. When this has all been settled, then the approbation and co-operation of Her Majesty's Imperial Government might be solicited.

Finally, in all that I have stated I hope not to be misunderstood (whatever my own convictions may be), as being desirous of *excluding any schemes from due consideration*, as I frankly confess, what indeed must be very evident, that I am a very incompetent person to offer any technical opinion, although it may be said in illustration that it is not necessary to be an astronomer to be able to see the moon.

All that I desire to submit, in opposition possibly to my fellow colonists before alluded to, is that before any hasty decision is taken on the subject, competent persons in the Colonies and at home should well weigh and investigate it, and recommend the course that may be best and most economical for all interests, and to this purpose I have endeavoured to show cause.

I have, &c.,  
(Signed) G. S. WALTERS, *Agent-General for South Australia.*

Sir F. ROGERS, *Bart.*

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*Mr. WALTERS to Sir F. ROGERS.*

*Office of Agent-General for South Australia,  
5, Copthall Court, London, 26th March, 1863.*

SIR,

I WAS in hopes that, after the letter I had the honor of addressing you on the 19th instant for the consideration of His Grace the Duke of Newcastle, I should have had no further occasion to trespass on your invaluable time.

The question of telegraphic communication is, however, of such deep interest to all the Australasian Colonies, as well as to Her Majesty's Government, that, with all my repugnance to place myself so repeatedly before you, I feel it a duty to enclose a copy of my letter addressed this day to the Government of South Australia.

It involves the consideration of a contract proposed by Mr. Passmore at an enormous saving to all the governments concerned, without exception.

The stability or sufficient guarantee of parties who will concur in the operation.

And finally, the new difficulty before unknown to me, that the cable laid down by Mr. Gisborne between Java and Singapore, that was relied upon for the connection between Australasia and India, has failed.

With a thousand apologies for my repeated intrusion, which I trust may not again occur.

I have, &c.,  
(Signed) G. S. WALTERS, *Agent-General for Her Majesty's Colony of South Australia.*

Sir F. ROGERS, *Bart.*

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*Mr. WALTERS to COLONIAL TREASURER,*

*4, Copthall Court, London, 26th March, 1863.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to lay before you the copy of a letter from Mr. Passmore, dated yesterday. You will perceive his desire that I should send to you the copy of his proposal to the Chancellor of the Exchequer which he encloses for that purpose; and I accordingly comply with his wish and now forward it. You will perceive that he tenders to make the line from East Java to Timor, and thence to land the cable on the nearest point on the north coast of Australasia; also to carry the wire further by land 1100 miles to the point that may be determined upon by the Australasian Governments, this central agreed point being that from which each Government can connect its own system and receive the telegrams simultaneously.

This Mr. Passmore proposes to do for the sum of £412,000 named in his correspondence with me already sent to you (in printed copies). I inquired of Mr. Passmore how he was situated with respect to affording some responsible guarantee for so large an undertaking (?), and in satisfaction of my inquiry he states that he is backed by responsible parties.

You will also notice possibly with something of the same surprise that I have felt the present condition of Mr. Gisborne's cable between Java and Singapore described by Mr. Passmore as broken down. Those seas are dangerous.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) G. S. WALTERS, *Agent-General for South Australia.*

*The Hon. the Treasurer of  
South Australia.*

*Mr. PASSMORE to Mr. WALTERS.*

*90, Cannon-street, E.C., 25th March, 1863.*

SIR,

I BEG to hand you herewith copy of my proposal to the Right Honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the 24th instant, stating my readiness to contract for the sea cable from East Java to the nearest point on the north coast, carrying a land line from thence 1100 miles to a point to be determined on by the various Colonial Governments, for the sum of £412,000 as named in my correspondence with you.

From the point so suggested each Colony might adopt its own line of communication, receiving their telegrams at the same moment of time.

I must, however, warn you that my proposition will not place Australia in communication with Singapore, inasmuch as Mr. Gisborne's cable between Java and Singapore is not at work, having been broken down for some weeks. If not made good, I think it is worthy of consideration whether the cable should not cross the Straits of Sunda at the shortest point, and be carried along the Island of Sumatra by land, crossing the Straits of Malacca at the nearest point to Singapore.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) WM. B. PASSMORE.

P.S.—Would you oblige me by sending to the South Australian Government the copy of my proposal?

*The Right Hon. F. PEEL to Sir FREDERIC ROGERS, Bart.*

*Treasury Chambers, 24th June, 1863.*

SIR,

WITH reference to your letters of the 16th March and 4th of April last, transmitting copies of letters and of their enclosures from Mr. Walters, the Agent-General from South Australia, respecting the establishment of telegraphic communication with the continent of Australia, I am commanded by the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury to acquaint you that my Lords have had brought under their notice, with a view of obtaining the assistance of Her Majesty's Government, several schemes for the purpose in question.

There is no doubt that the establishment of telegraphic communication with the Australian Colonies would be in all respects of great advantage, and no one could view otherwise than with much satisfaction the accomplishment of so desirable an object. My Lords however, from the information at present before them, are unable to arrive clearly at a conclusion as to what, in the collective opinions of the Australian Colonies, would be the scheme of telegraphic communication which upon the whole would be the best, nor whether they would be justified, on behalf of this country, in granting aid out of Imperial funds.

It therefore appears to my Lords that, before they come to any decision on the matter, and on every ground of comparative knowledge and interest, it would be expedient to adopt the suggestion contained in the letter from the Agent-General of South Australia, of 19th March last, addressed to you; viz.—That Representatives should be deputed by the various Colonies to meet together and discuss the subject in all its bearings. And they would suggest that the Duke of Newcastle, unless he sees any objection to so doing, should cause a communication, conveying suggestions to the above effect, and embracing the matters proposed in Mr. Walters' letter, to be made to the Governments of the respective Colonies concerned.

I am, &c.,  
(Signed) F. PEEL.

*Sir F. ROGERS, Bart.*