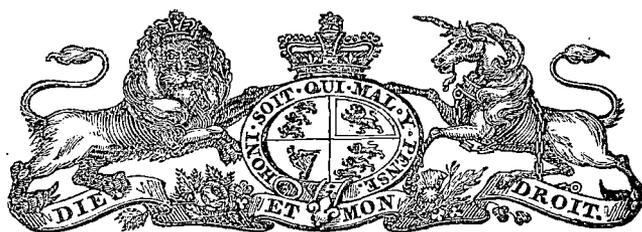


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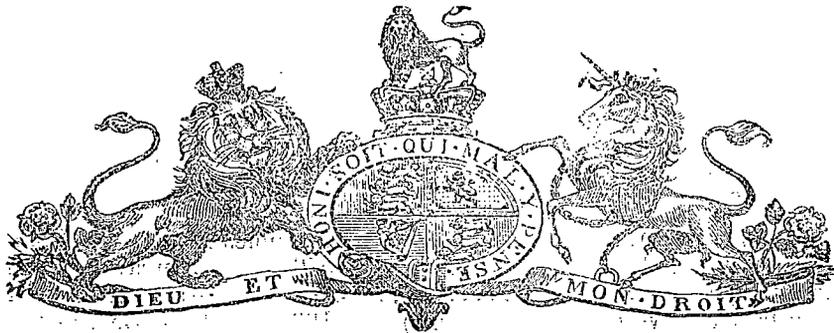
1885.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

INTERNATIONAL TELEGRAPH CONFERENCE,
BERLIN :

REPORT OF THE OPENING.

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



Berlin, 14th August, 1885.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to inform you that the International Telegraphic Conference was opened at Berlin on Monday last, and in importance it exceeded all previous Conferences of the kind. The attendance of Representatives from all Countries and Governments of the World gave to the proceedings considerable *éclat*, and the questions discussed will be of interest to your Government and the people of Tasmania.

My attention was, of course, primarily directed to the question of cable communication ^{NO. 1840} Europe, India, Australia, and Tasmania; and I could not hide from myself the fact that a monopoly existed, and exists, which is almost unparalleled, and necessarily causes a large amount of dissatisfaction. It certainly simplified matters to have the cables of the world in the hands of a few, but it rendered competition almost impossible.

The Opening Ceremony.

The Conference was held in a Great Hall of the Post Office. The President was Dr. Von Stephan, Secretary of State, and Postmaster-General of Germany, who made an eloquent opening speech, in which slight reference is made to Tasmania. I send a copy of the speech herewith.

Countries and Governments represented.

The International Telegraphic Conference was attended by the Representatives of the following Countries and Governments:—

Germany.	Cochin China.	Norway.
Austria.	Great Britain.	Holland.
Hungary.	India.	Persia.
Herzegovina.	South Australia.	Portugal.
Belgium.	New South Wales.	Roumania.
Brazil.	Tasmania.	Russia.
Bulgaria.	Greece.	Servia.
Denmark.	Italy.	Siam.
Egypt.	Japan.	Sweden.
Spain.	Luxemburg.	Switzerland.
France.	Montenegro.	Turkey.

The following is a list of the Telegraphic Companies represented at the Conference:—

Germany United.	Eastern Extension Australasia and China.
Anglo-American.	Eastern and South African.
Black Sea.	Grand Compagnie du Nord.
Brazilian Submarine.	Indo-European.
Compagnie Français.	Spanish National Submarine.
Direct Spanish.	Submarine.
Direct United.	West Coast of America.
Western Union.	West India and Panama.
Eastern.	Western and Brazilian.

The Owners of the Cables to Australia.

Our interest is of course centred in the Eastern, the Eastern Extension, the Indo-European, and perhaps the Eastern and South African, for messages to and from the Cape of Good Hope. With the exception of the Indo-European, which has a joint purse for Indian and Australian messages with the Eastern and its satellites, the four Companies named are composed of almost the same people. The Eastern Telegraph Company at the Conference was represented by Mr. John

Pender, M.P., Sir James Anderson, Mr. Lewis Wells, M. Jules Depecher, and Mr. Hilberdine. The Eastern Extension Company was represented by Mr. John Pender, Mr. Lewis Wells, M. Jules Depecher, and Mr. J. E. Hesse. The Eastern and South African Company by Mr. John Pender, M.P., Sir James Anderson, and Mr. Lewis Wells. Mr. John Pender, M.P., represents no less than five Companies at this Conference.

The Route and Charges from England.

To make the matter clear, I beg to say that we ordinarily get our cable messages from England over the following cables and land lines :

Eastern Company (Cable).....	6479 miles	London to Bombay.
Indian Government (Land Line).....	650 miles	Bombay to Madras.
Eastern Extension (Cable).....	3862 miles	Madras to Port Darwin.
The South Australian Government (Land Line)..	2100 miles	Port Darwin to Adelaide.

TOTAL 13,091 miles London to Adelaide.

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	
We pay the Eastern Company.....	3	1	per word.
" Indian Government.....	0	8	"
" Eastern Extension Company	5	8	"
" S. A. Government.....	1	3	"
TOTAL	<u>10</u>	<u>8</u>	"

The Indian Government and the Eastern Extension Companies' charges are monstrous ones, particularly the former. Incredible as it may appear, the Indian Government charge 8*d.* per word per message to Australia, and only 1*d.* for their own messages over the same wires from Bombay to Madras. For local Press messages from Port Darwin to Adelaide the South Australian Government charge about 3*d.* per word, while for English Press messages 1*s.* 3*d.* per word is charged for the same distance and over the same wires from Port Darwin to Adelaide. These abuses must be remedied.

Work in progress.

Since the day of opening the Conference we have done little but make arrangements for the battle, such as forming Committees, distributing papers containing our views, and interchanging ideas in a desultory sort of fashion. The two Committees are for the purpose of considering the tariff and the technical work of the telegraph lines, from both of which good results may be expected.

While it is not believed that the German proposals for an uniform telegraph rate of, say, 2*d.* per word throughout Europe will be granted, yet it is hoped that such modifications may be made in this direction as will be acceptable, and as an instalment to the desired end. The strong argument in favour of an uniform tariff is that it will simplify telegraphy, and make popular the telegraph wires, relieve the Post Office, besides saving an enormous amount of time, which is of first importance in these days. Uniformity of postal charges throughout Europe has given the best results. I have had opportunities of speaking to the members of the German Government on the question, and they say it is monstrous that Cable Companies should control the cables, and high profits, sometimes 15 per cent., be declared for this class of work, which is essentially one connected with the public benefit and welfare as much as railways and the post office.

As I informed you by telegraph (the free use of which was courteously placed at the disposal of the Delegates by the German Government), I have opened up communication with the British Representatives here in regard to our particular grievances—the high rates for cable messages between Australia and Europe. India has also grievances, and I enlisted India on our side in order to strengthen our hands. No reply has yet been received.

The mail is about to close for Australia. I shall report progress next week.

I have, &c.

J. HENNIKER HEATON.

To the Hon. the Premier and Chief Secretary, Tasmania.