

(No. 60.)



1856.

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TASMANIA.

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ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH.

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Return—Mr. Abye Douglas; 13 February. Laid on the Table by Mr. Colonial Treasurer, 30 March, 1857, and ordered by the House to be printed.



*RETURN* respecting ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH, asked for by Mr. Douglas for the House of Assembly.

QUESTION.

Date of the Contract, &c.?

ANSWER.

Tenders were invited by Public Advertisement; and those received were submitted on the 11th September, 1856, and that of Mr. Butcher approved on the 24th September for the whole; viz.—

George Town to Launceston, at £62 10s. per mile; Launceston to Hobart Town, £52 per mile; and Hobart Town to Mount Lewis, £57 per mile.

The Contract, dated December 2nd, has been entered into for the portion between Hobart Town and Launceston. The remaining portions could not be entered upon until certain powers had been conferred on the Government by the passing of the "Electric Telegraph Act."

Whether the Contract includes the erection of Station-houses, &c.?

The Contract does not include the erection of Station-houses at the *termini*, or at the intermediate places; it having been proposed that the Government should avail themselves of present establishments for that purpose. As these have not yet, so far as I am aware, been fixed upon, I am unable to give an estimate of the cost of their adaptation.

The estimated cost of working the line?

I have never been made acquainted with the intentions of the Government in respect of this subject.

I find, however, among the papers sent to me from the Colonial Secretary's Office, that Mr. McGowan, in his Report of June, 1856, states that, besides a general Superintendent, two qualified persons will be required at each Station, and one or more active lads as Messengers. The number of *employées* will, however, I conceive, depend very much on the amount of business transacted by the Telegraph.

I have since been informed by Mr. Oppenheim, who is connected with the Telegraph Establishments in the adjoining Colonies, that a really competent person to take the entire supervision, instruct the subordinates in the use of the instruments, and repair the latter when out of order, &c., &c., cannot be obtained for less than £400 a year; and that, with such supervision, persons hitherto unacquainted with the work would soon learn it, and that these latter might be quite subordinate appointments at small salaries.

## QUESTION.

Copy of the estimate of the cost of establishing a Submarine Telegraph across the Straits; and a copy of the undertaking of the Government of Victoria to contribute half the expense of establishing the same.

## ANSWER.

I was not aware that an estimate of this undertaking had been made. Amongst the papers forwarded to me, I find a report of Mr. M'Gowan's of August 6th, 1856, in which is embodied an approximate estimate of its cost, amounting to £33,000,—which report, with the letter to the Victorian Government, and their reply, I have detached from the papers and enclose herewith.

WM. P. KAY.

*Office of Public Works, February 23, 1857.*

*Tasmania, Colonial Secretary's Office, 26th September, 1856.*

SIR,

I do myself the honor to acquaint you that the attention of this Government has been directed to the advantages which would accrue to the Australian Colonies if communication by Electric Telegraph were established between them; the first step towards the accomplishment of which object, so far as this Colony is concerned, is evidently the connexion of this Island to the Continent of New Holland.

From an estimate which has been obtained from the Superintendent of the Electric Telegraph in Victoria, it appears that a line from the Heads to the Tamar along the north coast of Tasmania to Cape Grim, through King's Island to Cape Otway, and thence to Queenscliff, may be constructed for about £33,000.

As the establishment of this connexion between Tasmania and Victoria will be of mutual benefit,—not only as respects the interchange of messages between the two Colonies, but also as communicating with the proposed Light-house on King's Island,—it is considered that the expense of the undertaking may fairly be shared in equal proportions between the two Governments.

I am directed by Governor Sir H. Young to request that you will bring the subject under the consideration of the Governor of Victoria, with the view of ascertaining whether or not he is disposed to concur in the views entertained by this Government, and to propose to the Legislature that the work should be commenced without loss of time, at the joint expense of Victoria and Tasmania.

I have, &c.

*The Honourable the Chief Secretary,  
Melbourne, Victoria.*

W. CHAMP.

*Victoria, Chief Secretary's Office, Melbourne, 23rd October, 1856.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge your Despatch of the 26th ultimo, in which you state that the attention of the Government of Tasmania has been directed to the advantages of inter-colonial communication by means of the Electric Telegraph; and that having ascertained the probable cost of a line from the Heads of the Tamar to Queenscliff, via Cape Grim, King's Island, and Cape Otway, to be about £33,000, His Excellency Sir Henry Young proposes, should the Government of Victoria concur, that the work be commenced without loss of time, at the joint expense of Tasmania and Victoria.

His Excellency Major-General Macarthur desires me, in reply, to inform you that he has brought the subject under the consideration of his Executive Council; and that, while they concur with him in deeming that public works of greater importance demand the first attention of this Government, they are indisposed to throw any impediment in the way of the immediate prosecution of an undertaking of so much moment to the other Governments of Australia,—forming as it does a part of the general scheme of communication, the commencement of which has been already sanctioned by the Legislature of Victoria.

I am accordingly to state that His Excellency will invite the Legislature to appropriate a sum sufficient to repay the Government of Tasmania, on the completion of the work, one half of the cost of constructing a line of Telegraph from Tasmania to Cape Otway (such moiety not to exceed £14,000), and to construct a branch line from Queenscliff or Warnambool to Cape Otway.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

J. MOORE, *Under Secretary.*

*The Honorable the Colonial Secretary, Tasmania.*