

SUBMARINE ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH.

(PETITION FOR FORMATION OF BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND AUSTRALIA.)

Ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be Printed, 18 May, 1858.

To the Honorable the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, in Parliament assembled.

The Petition of the undersigned, George Bowness Carr, John Alexander Mainley Pinniger, John Wortley de la More, and Henry Masterman, of London, Esquires,—

SHewETH:—

That your Petitioners are the promoters of a public company having for its object to establish a direct independent Line of Submarine Electric Telegraph between Great Britain and Her Majesty's Australasian Colonies.

They propose to lay down along the eastern coast of Australia such Electric Submarine Telegraphs as will effect a communication *via* Torres Straits between some point on the line of Electric Telegraphs of the Honorable East India Company, or other Electric Telegraphs in, or intended to be brought into, communication with Great Britain or the Continent of Europe and the Australasian Colonies, by which means these Colonies will, on the completion of Telegraphic Lines already in operation or projected, have direct communication by Telegraph with Europe, Great Britain, and America.

The Company will take power to lay down such branches and connecting Lines as may be thought advisable.

Your Petitioners, who are actively engaged, under the sanction of Her Majesty's Government, in carrying out other important undertakings of a similar character, have secured the co-operation of an eminent firm engaged in the business of manufacturing submarine cables, who are ready to undertake the contract for the construction and laying down of the Australian Lines of Submarine Telegraph on favorable terms.

It is intended that the Company shall be incorporated either under the English Joint Stock Companies Act, 1856, or by special Act of the Legislature.

Your Petitioners are desirous of obtaining from the Legislature of this Colony powers to lay down and work their telegraphs to and upon the coast of this Colony, and such other special and exclusive privileges and advantages as the Legislature may consider beneficial to the Company and be willing to accord.

Provided the application of your Petitioners be granted, the undertaking will be completed before or in the course of the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two.

A proportion of the capital of the proposed Company will be reserved for allotment in Australia, together with a proportion of seats in the direction of the Company to be filled by gentlemen connected with Australia and resident in England, or in the Colonies, as may be deemed expedient ; it is also intended to constitute a Colonial Council.

As it is essential, for the purpose of raising the requisite capital for this great undertaking, that the inducement of a minimum guaranteed interest should be offered to the public, your Petitioners venture to hope that the Government of this Colony alone, or in conjunction with the Imperial and other Colonial Governments, will be willing to enter into an arrangement for securing this object, such as agreeing, upon security being given for the completion of the undertaking, to pay a fixed rate of interest, being not less than six per cent., on the outlay during construction, and to guarantee the same for a fixed period after its completion.

The Company will, in such event, be prepared to place Colonial Government Messages upon the same footing of preference as Imperial Government Messages, and to charge for such messages the same rates as may be demanded for ordinary public or private messages; it being understood that if the Imperial or Colonial Government Messages in any year shall, at the usual tariff rate charged to the public, amount to a larger sum than the interest guaranteed by such Governments respectively, such additional payments shall be made as shall be equivalent thereto.

The Company will also consent that the Imperial and Colonial Governments shall fix the tariff of charges, which shall not be increased, without their joint consent, so long as the contract with such Governments respectively lasts. Each Colonial Government, in common with the Imperial Government, shall be at liberty to appoint an "ex officio" Director on the Board of Directors, to watch their joint interests, and, if they shall so desire, to have agents of their own at any of the stations along the line, to superintend the receipt and transmission of their messages.

Your Petitioners feel that the advantages to be obtained for Great Britain and her most important Colonies by this undertaking are too obvious to need mention, whilst the success which has attended other undertakings of a similar nature carried out by your Petitioners in various parts of the world, leaves no reasonable doubt of the feasibility of that now proposed.

Your Petitioners humbly submit, that the undertaking is one in all respects worthy of the support and assistance of the Colonial Government; and

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray, that you will be pleased to permit a Bill to be submitted to the Honorable the Legislative Assembly of the Colony of New South Wales, and will extend to it your favorable consideration.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

G. B. CARR.

J. A. M. PINNIGER.

J. WORTLEY DE LA MORE.

H. MASTERMAN.
