

## TELEGRAM.

THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY OF NEW SOUTH WALES to THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY OF QUEENSLAND.

Sydney, 6th October, 1870.

As you desire, we will await the receipt of your letter before determining *re* telegraph.

CHARLES COWPER,  
Colonial Secretary.

THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY OF QUEENSLAND to THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY OF NEW SOUTH WALES.

Queensland, Colonial Secretary's Office,  
Brisbane, 7th October, 1870.

SIR,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your telegram of the 4th instant, intimating that you did not consider it desirable to have competing Telegraphic Lines from Java, as suggested in my telegram of 29th ultimo, and you express an opinion that it would be more advisable to connect with the Land Line of South Australia, from Port Darwin to Port Augusta, than to have a second line landed within the Queensland Territory, in the construction of which you did not feel justified in joining.

As connection with the South Australian Line, in any way whatever, is totally opposed to our views, I should be glad if you would take into consideration the enclosed copy of a letter addressed by the Superintendent of Telegraphs to the Postmaster-General before you come to a final determination on the matter, as I am in hopes it may induce you to alter your opinion.

I have, &c.,  
A. H. PALMER,  
Colonial Secretary.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary, New South Wales.

[ENCLOSURE.]

THE SUPERINTENDENT OF ELECTRIC TELEGRAPHS to THE HONORABLE THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL OF QUEENSLAND.

Electric Telegraph Department,  
Superintendent's Office,  
Brisbane, 8rd October, 1870.

SIR,

I have the honor, by direction, to report on a telegram [*vide* Enclosure], received by the Honorable the Colonial Secretary from the Chief Secretary, Adelaide, informing this Government that the British Australian Telegraph Company has consented to their proposition to terminate their works at Port Darwin; and at the same time urging the Government of South Australia to arrange with the other colonies for an alternative route. Before doing so, however, I may remark that, although the Company was formed for the purpose of connecting Singapore with the Queensland system, the Representative of the Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Company, on arriving in Australia, placed himself in communication with the South Australian Government, and, without reference to the Eastern Colonies, entered into a provisional arrangement with them to terminate the company's works at Port Darwin, provided that colony would undertake to construct a land line across the continent to Port Augusta. This has since been approved of by the company in the face of a letter dated 25th January, 1870, from Captain Sherard Osborn, R.N., Managing Director of the Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Company, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in which he states that the line would be carried out in extension of the Queensland system; also, a letter of the same date, from Captain Sherard Osborn to His Excellency the Governor, urging that this Government would lose no time in completing the line to Barketown, so as to be prepared to meet their works.

The proposal of the Queensland Government—for the Company to lay a cable from Normanton to Cooping, under a five per cent. guarantee—is declined in the present state of money market.

I do not think that the proposal, emanating from the company, for us to extend our lines from Normanton to connect with the South Australian main line at the Roper, when the probable outlay and doubtful benefit is duly considered, can be seriously entertained. In a letter, dated 16th June last, to the Governor of South Australia, Lord Monck, Chairman of the British-Australian Telegraph Company, says:—“In view of the loss that would arise, both to the Australian Colonies and the company, were the cable to be landed at Port Darwin before the completion of the land line to Port Augusta, I would beg to call your attention to the question, whether it would not be advisable to commence the construction from Port Darwin as well as from Port Augusta, at the same time inviting the co-operation of Queensland by simultaneously extending her system towards the proposed points of junction. By this means, should the whole line between Port Darwin and Port Augusta not be complete by the time of landing the cable, there would still be a connection between the cable and the centres of government and commerce *in* Queensland.” For this purpose, and during interruptions on their direct line, the proposed connection would no doubt prove of great convenience both to South Australia and the company, but at no other time could we expect a fair share of the business to and from the neighboring colonies, as, in the event of their line working well, it is but natural that they should secure all the traffic possible. This might be done by a protective tariff between our junction station and Port Darwin, or in other ways.

The length of a line from Normanton to the proposed junction on Stuart's track, near the Roper, would be about 700 miles, and the cost of construction, including station buildings, would be about £80,000.

In order to ensure constant communication, station buildings would be required at distances not exceeding fifty miles, and the total annual cost for maintenance and working might be stated at £10,000, which, added to the interest on cost of construction, would make this line a total annual charge of about £15,000.

Under these circumstances it would be preferable to be in a position to fairly compete with the South Australian line; and in the event of our offer to the British-Australian Company of a guarantee of five per cent. per annum on the cost of a cable from Coepang to the Norman not being at once taken up, I would recommend the desirability of the Governments of New South Wales, New Zealand, and Queensland, entering into a contract for laying a cable from the Norman to East Java, and then relying on the lines of the Netherlands Indian Government for connection with Singapore.

The total distance from East Java to the Norman is 2,000 miles, and the total cost of laying a suitable and serviceable cable would not exceed £350,000; this, at five per cent., would give an annual cost of £17,500. The annual cost for maintenance and working would be about £5,500, making a total annual cost of say £23,000, which might be provided by the three colonies, and the receipts divided accordingly. This cost would be made up by a traffic of twenty-five messages each way, or a total of fifty messages each day, for 307 days during the year, at a tariff of thirty shillings for each message. I have little doubt but that, if the means of communication were available, the amount of business would far exceed general anticipation, as the competition of trade would compel its use.

In conclusion, I may observe, that should this proposal meet with the approval of the governments interested in opening up this communication, it will be necessary to send a competent person to England without delay, to make arrangements and overlook the manufacture of the cable, in order that it may be laid as soon as possible after the completion of our land line to the Gulf, which I have every reason to hope will not be later than April next.

I have, &c.,

W. J. CRACKNELL.

The Honorable the Postmaster-General.

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#### TELEGRAM.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY, ADELAIDE, to THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, BRISBANE.

Adelaide, 30th September, 1870.

British Australian Telegraph Company consent to land cable at Port Darwin to join our overland line, on terms which we are prepared to agree to. They, at the same time, urge us to arrange with other colonies for an alternative line. We have no objection to negotiate on an equitable basis for alternative land line, for which our deviation to the Roper is admirably adapted. What are your views on this subject? We have telegraphed to New South Wales Government—asked them to confer with you on the subject.

CHIEF SECRETARY,

Adelaide.

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#### TELEGRAM.

THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, QUEENSLAND, to THE CHIEF SECRETARY, ADELAIDE.

Brisbane, 7th October, 1870.

I have laid your telegram of 30th ult. before Cabinet. Pending communication with N. S. Wales, we decline any present action. We don't understand meaning of deviation to the Roper. Do you mean to come down to mouth of river, or us to connect on Stuart's track?

A. H. PALMER,

Colonial Secretary.

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THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, QUEENSLAND, to THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, NEW SOUTH WALES.

Queensland, Colonial Secretary's Office,

Brisbane, 21st October, 1870.

SIR,

Referring to numerous communications on the same subject, I now forward copies of telegrams from the South Australian Government, with my reply thereto, to which I have not yet received any answer.

I have also the honor to enclose two memorandums from our Superintendent of Telegraphs with reference to the same subject.

I have, &c.,

A. H. PALMER,

Colonial Secretary.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary, New South Wales.

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THE SUPERINTENDENT OF ELECTRIC TELEGRAPHS to THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, BRISBANE.

Electric Telegraph Department,

Superintendent's Office,

15th October, 1870.

MEMO.—With reference to my letter of the 3rd instant, to the Honorable the Postmaster-General, reporting on the proposed extension of the Queensland system, to connect with the South Australian trunk line at the Roper, I have the honor, in accordance with your request, to pass a few remarks relative to the nature of the country between the Roper and Albert, and the probable cost of construction, &c.

I am informed by the Surveyor-General that the country the proposed line would traverse offers few facilities for the construction of the telegraph, and in several localities is impracticable for the passage of drays.

I learn from Mr. Gregory's valuable report (which he has kindly placed at my disposal), on the proceedings of the exploring expedition under his command in 1856, that the timber in north-western Australia generally is small, crooked, and decayed at the heart, and that the country between the Roper and the Albert was found to be extremely barren, consisting for the most part of rocky sandstone hills, or sandy table land, covered with scrub. Should this route be followed, so far as at present known, no timber suitable for telegraph poles can be found, excepting in the vicinity of the Roper.

In Leichhardt's description of the coast country he explored, between the above rivers, in 1845, I see nothing to lead to the belief that the timber materially differs from the kind met with in other localities on the southern shores of Carpentaria, where very little is found available for construction purposes.

I roughly estimate the average cost of proposed line at £100 per mile, which cannot be thought excessive when the nature of the country is duly considered. The iron poles alone, exclusive of land carriage would cost half this amount.

£7,000 has been allowed for erecting thirteen (13) station buildings, and £3,000 for supervision, instruments, stores, and incidental expenses; making the total cost for erecting the 700 miles of line £80,000, and I do not believe a serviceable line can be erected for a less amount, unless better country can be discovered than at present known.

39 officers would be required to work the line, as it would be necessary to place three men at each station for protection from the blacks, who are both hostile and numerous.

The officers in charge would be allowed £300, and the line men £150 per annum; total for salaries, £7,800; this, with an amount of £2,200 for provisions, stores, maintenance, and carriage, would make the total annual working expenses £10,000, which could not be reduced until the country becomes settled or police protection provided.

This colony can hardly be expected to expend so large a sum in constructing and maintaining a line that will be useless for local purposes for many years to come; but should the neighboring colonies deem the proposed connection desirable in order to secure a double means of communication with the northern coast, there can, I think, be no objection to allow them to carry out the proposal by means of a submarine cable between the rivers Norman and Roper at their own cost, leaving Queensland free to make arrangements for a direct line when opportunity offers.

W. J. CRACKNELL.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary.

Electric Telegraph Department,  
Superintendent's Office,  
Brisbane, 20th October, 1870.

MEMO.—Distance from mouth of the Norman to mouth of the Roper, allowing for slack—say 425 miles; cost of cable with expenses of laying—say £80,000; annual cost for maintenance and working expenses—say £2,000.

The principal advantages of a cable from the Norman to the Roper over the construction of a land line are the less cost of working expenses and maintenance, and certainty of its construction within a given time. The construction of a land line would take a long time, and should seasons prove unfavorable it would be hard to say when it could be completed.

Should it be determined to treat with South Australia as to this line, there should be a specific undertaking on their part, that they will build the line to the mouth of the Roper within a given time; also, that they will satisfactorily maintain the line in proper order through their territory. It should also be first agreed that the charge from Port Darwin to the Roper is reasonable; also, that our branch line should receive a certain share of business—say all Queensland and New South Wales, and half of Victorian and Tasmanian business.

The distances and cost of lines in Queensland are as follows:—

|                                       |                 |         |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---------|
| New South Wales border to Brisbane... | 179 Miles       | £16,000 |
| Brisbane to Cardwell ...              | 1,032 "         | £57,000 |
| Cardwell to Normanton ...             | 440 "           | £22,000 |
| Total ...                             | 1,651 "         | £95,000 |
| Sydney to Queensland Border...        | 527 Miles, cost | £33,354 |

W. J. CRACKNELL.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary.

THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY OF QUEENSLAND to JOHN DOUGLAS, ESQUIRE.

Queensland, Colonial Secretary's Office,  
Brisbane, 2nd November, 1870.

Sir,  
I am directed to transmit for your information a memo. addressed to the Colonial Secretary by the Superintendent of Telegraphs, which embodies the general views of the Government on the subject of telegraphic communication between Great Britain and the Australian Colonies.

I have, &c.,  
H. H. MASSIE,  
Under Colonial Secretary.

The Agent-General for Queensland, London.

THE SUPERINTENDENT OF ELECTRIC TELEGRAPHS to THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Electric Telegraph Department,  
Superintendent's Office,  
Brisbane, 1st November, 1870.

MEMO.—The telegram referred to in Mr. Douglas's letter of the 7th September last has not been received, but as his letter of the 2nd of the same month mentions an Act of Parliament required to be passed by the Legislature of South Australia guaranteeing the British Australian Company against loss, it probably relates to the same subject.

Should the British Australian Company accept the terms now offered by the Bill in question, which has passed through all its stages, and, as stated in Mr. Douglas's letter of the 2nd of September, carry their cable direct from Java to Port Darwin, the Netherlands Indian Government would, no doubt, assist the Eastern Colonies to lay a cable from East Java *via* Coepang to the Norman, and connect their lines in Sumatra with Singapore. They would at the same time be in a position to make arrangements for a fair share of the traffic from India and Europe.

All the land sections on this line would traverse settled country throughout, and constant communication could be secured. Thus the interests of Queensland and the neighboring colonies would be better served than by the proposed extension from Normantown to the Roper, which would pass through unsettled country, and be liable to frequent and protracted interruptions.

I have little confidence in the line now in course of erection between Port Augusta and Port Darwin, but think it would be even better for a time to depend upon South Australia for our international business than expend the large sum of money that would be required to extend our line to the Roper, which, at the best, would be of doubtful benefit to Queensland.

In the event of Java and the Eastern Colonies declining the responsibility of a direct line from the Norman, there can be little doubt, when the true position of the British Australian Company with regard to the Australian land lines becomes known in England, but that another company will be started to complete the proposed connection with Eastern Australia, and thereby secure the advantages that the British Australian Company has evidently thrown away.

W. J. CRACKNELL.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary.

JOHN DOUGLAS, ESQUIRE, to THE HONORABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, BRISBANE.

Queensland Government Office,  
Charing Cross, London,  
5th October, 1870.

SIR,

I forward herewith copy of a letter I have to-day received from Mr. Gisborne, the original projector of telegraphic communication between England and Australia.

I gather from my previous correspondence with you, as well as from information derived from the managing director of the British-Australian Company, that the right to connect with the submarine cable at Port Darwin will not be allowed by the Government of South Australia except on such terms as are not likely to be accepted by the Government of Queensland.

It would, therefore, appear that the fortuitous possession of uninhabited territory on the northern coast of Australia by a province whose natural coast line fronts the Southern Ocean, is likely to prove a barrier to the complete circulation of that intelligence which, by the enterprise of British capitalists, will be conveyed to the shores of Australia.

This exclusive spirit, fostered, as it has been, by the existence of boundary lines which, though at present arbitrary, are essentially fictitious, may not, however, be unattended by counterbalancing advantages; for it would now appear that the Governments of Queensland and New South Wales will not be content to remain dependent upon the Government of South Australia in a matter in which a territorial superiority, governed by no sound geographical principles, has given birth to a policy which seems to be both mischievous and obstructive.

I infer, accordingly, that the Governments which have reason to be dissatisfied with the South Australian monopoly will be favorably disposed to Mr. Gisborne's proposals, which, if adopted, would have the effect of providing a duplicate line of telegraphic communication between England and Australia.

I have already expressed my opinion in favor of the direct purchase of a cable.

I cannot, and do not, after full consideration, recede from that opinion; but I feel bound to say that I believe Mr. Gisborne's connection to be an influential one, and I have no doubt that if his proposal is accepted, the result will be that a duplicate line will be laid simultaneously from Java to India as well as from Java to Australia.

Every day increases the confidence of the public in submarine telegraphy, and the risk attached to the submersion and maintenance of cables is reduced to a minimum which is surprising to contemplate. The possession of intelligence by this mode of communication becomes more and more a public necessity; and it is most fitting that the Governments of such communities as those in Australia, should undertake the development of these enterprises, which are likely to have so large an influence in the future.

I have, &amp;c.,

JOHN DOUGLAS.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary, Brisbane.

7, Bruton street, London, W.,  
4th October, 1870.

Sir,

I desire to submit to your Government a proposal for establishing a submarine line of telegraph from the east end of Java to the head of Gulf Carpentaria.

As matters stand, all the Australian Colonies have been invited to adopt a sea telegraph, proposed to be laid between Java and Port Darwin, with an overland extension to the head of Spencer Gulf, as their only means of communication with India and Europe. The sea portion is to be carried out by a company, and the overland portion by the South Australian Government.

Various serious difficulties have arisen in concluding any arrangement for connecting the Queensland telegraph, terminating at the head of Gulf Carpentaria with Port Darwin.

I desire to submit a few considerations, which go to show that, in any case, a direct line from East Java to the head of Gulf Carpentaria is absolutely required.

The advantage to all the Australian Colonies of possessing a duplicate line will be rendered clear when it is considered that had the telegraphic communication between Europe and America, and between Europe and India, depended upon only one line in each case, it would, both as regards America and India, have been frequently interrupted for several months at a time. Moreover, the interests of Queensland, New South Wales, and New Zealand evidently require a separate and independent means of telegraphic communication, starting from a distinct point from the coast of Australia, and under the exclusive control of those colonies.

I now proceed to explain the plan for establishing the proposed independent and alternative line. As it is to some extent a competing telegraph which it is proposed to carry out, it is absolutely necessary, in order to ensure success, that the colonies which are interested in it should give it financial assistance, reserving to themselves a control over the amount of capital to be expended in establishing the line, and over the proceedings of the company. The least onerous form of financial assistance which the colonies can adopt, and which at the same time will be perfectly effectual in raising the required capital, is to guarantee a certain rate of interest upon the cost of the undertaking. It is proposed, therefore, that a payment of six per cent. per annum be made to the company for 99 years on £700,000, or such less or greater sum not exceeding £800,000 as may be agreed upon with the Queensland Government; the net receipts of the line to be in reduction or extinction of the guaranteed payment, as the case may be. The guarantee is only to run so long as the company shall maintain telegraphic communication between East Java and the head of Gulf Carpentaria; a reasonable time for effecting repairs being allowed. The guarantee shall not cease for the remainder of the 99 years, but a proportionate sum shall be deducted from the guaranteed payment for the time occupied in repairing the cable beyond the time allowed.

The Government of India guarantees 5 per cent. per annum on the cost of the Indian railways for ninety-nine years.

Should the guarantee be given, the company will also endeavor to lay down a cable of its own, between Calcutta and Singapore, and thence to Batavia, thus securing a second line of telegraph for the whole distance between India and Australia.

I have been offered by the Dutch Government a concession similar to that granted to the British Australian Telegraph Company, securing the transmission of messages to and from Australia, over the Dutch line, through Java, and containing other favorable conditions. I have also advocated a line to Australia, terminating in Queensland.

I have, &c.,

R. GISBORNE.

The Agent-General for Queensland, London.