

1877.

VICTORIA.

TELEGRAPH CABLE *viâ* UNITED STATES.

COPY OF CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING TELEGRAPH CABLE *viâ* THE UNITED STATES.

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY'S COMMAND.

New Zealand,
Colonial Secretary's Office, Wellington, 20th July 1877.

SIR, The Conference held in Sydney during January and February last, requesting the Government of New Zealand to communicate with the Government of the United States, in order to ascertain whether the latter would contribute towards the cost, and would otherwise aid the laying of a telegraph cable from some point on the westerly coast of the United States to New Zealand.

I have the honor to forward to you six printed copies of the Memorandum by the Commissioner of Telegraphs, which was forwarded to His Excellency the Governôr, in order that it might be in official course transmitted through the Colonial Office to the United States Government.

I have the honor, &c.,
[(Signed) DANIEL POLLEN.

The Honorable the Chief Secretary, Victoria.

A CABLE *viâ* THE UNITED STATES.

Memorandum for His Excellency.

His Excellency is aware that, in January last, a Conference of representatives of the Australasian Governments was held at Sydney, to consider the Telegraph Cable question, especially as to obtaining a duplicate system of communication with Europe and the rest of the world; and that the Commissioner of Telegraphs, Mr. George McLean, was the representative of New Zealand.

*Memoranda re
Cable from the
United States.*

2. The Conference decided that this Government should communicate with the Government of the United States of America, to ascertain whether the latter would be prepared to aid the laying of a cable from the western coast of the United States (probably from San Francisco) to the north of New Zealand. Such a cable would certainly be preferred to partial duplications of any existing system by the eastern route; but the work cannot be undertaken unless the United States will contribute liberally towards its very great cost.

3. Ministers desire to comply with the wish of the Conference. They accordingly forward to His Excellency the accompanying memorandum by Mr. McLean; and they respectfully ask that His Excellency will transmit a copy thereof, so that, through Her Majesty's Government, it may reach the Government of the United States, and be recommended for favorable consideration.

DANIEL POLLEN
(In the absence of the Premier).

Wellington, 9th April 1877.

(Enclosure.)

Memorandum by the Commissioner of Telegraphs respecting Duplication of Cables.

The question of improved telegraphic communication between the Australasian colonies and the rest of the world is one of great interest and importance, and has received much attention from the several Colonial Governments.

2. The Government of South Australia, at its own cost and risk, undertook the construction of a line, about 2,000 miles in length, across the Australian Continent. This work was one of enormous magnitude compared with the number of the population out of whose revenue it was effected, and the great stretches of uninhabited country through which it passes render its maintenance very costly. To connect with this trans-continental line, the Eastern Extension Australasia and China Telegraph Company (Limited) laid a cable from Singapore to Port Darwin, and thus joined Australia with Europe and America. The Governments of New Zealand and New South Wales guaranteed a subsidy for connecting those colonies; a cable, over 1,200 miles long, was laid by the Eastern Extension Company, and it has been uninterruptedly worked for more than twelve months. New Zealand has thus been brought into the general telegraph system.

3. Occasional failures of the cables joining the Indian system with the Australian line at Port Darwin, or of the latter at points far in the interior, have caused the urgent need for a second line of communication to be forcibly felt, especially by merchants and traders.

4. A Conference, at which each of the Governments was represented, was held during January last in Sydney, New South Wales, for the consideration of the whole question.

5. A copy of the report, minutes of proceedings, &c., is appended hereto.

6. The resolutions adopted by the Conference included one recommending that negotiations or enquiries should be commenced, with a view to the construction of a cable to be laid between the United States and New Zealand; and it was further resolved that the Government of this colony should "enter into communication with the Government of the United States, for the purpose of procuring their assent to contribute to the payment of any subsidy that may be payable in respect" of such a cable.

7. Complying with the direction of the Conference, the Commissioner of Telegraphs suggests that this memorandum be forwarded to His Excellency the Governor, for transmission, through the Secretary of State, to the Government of the United States; and the Commissioner trusts that His Excellency will feel justified in promoting as far as possible the object of the Conference.

8. There is in these colonies, and amongst mercantile men in London, a feeling that, if the route through Europe and India be chosen for the second line of telegraph, it should be secured by an essentially independent system, and not by duplications of portions of any line in operation. Dangers which affect the stability of one cable may almost equally, and at the same time, affect a second laid in the same stretch of sea, although not in proximity. Monopoly should be guarded against as far as possible. All reasons why a second line should be a separate one tell even more strongly in favor of the adoption of a totally distinct route; and by the choice of the Pacific Ocean course, from the United States southwards, not only would this advantage be most effectually gained, but a line would be secured which might reasonably be expected not to fail at the same time as one from England eastward. At present, much inconvenience results from the mutilation of messages by operators unacquainted with the English language. Freedom from such mutilation could be secured at any repeating station in the Pacific. But for its cost, this route would be preferred by all the Australasian colonies.

9. It is understood that a cable from California to Japan, *viâ* the Hawaiian group, will very probably be laid. If this be done, San Francisco will be connected with Honolulu, and thus one-third of the work desired by the Conference will be completed for a separate purpose, in itself, of great importance to the United States. On the other hand, English companies interested in the Eastern route are striving to obtain from the colonies a subsidy for duplicating certain lines. If those companies succeed, the question of an Australasian telegraph *viâ* the United States will be indefinitely postponed, although a large portion of the necessary work will (as has been said) be done by the Japan cable.

10. The Conference assumed that the Government of the United States would be disposed to concede substantial assistance towards a Pacific cable, because (putting aside all other considerations) telegraphic communication with Australasia by that route would be a great aid to commerce. The Australasian colonies have now a population of about 2,500,000, apart from aboriginal natives. That population consumes very largely per head of many articles of food which are now, and may continue to be, imported from the United States; and it desires to use much more largely than at present many tools and labor-saving machines which the United States supplies better and cheaper than any other country.

11. The declared value of imports from the United States into the Australasian colonies during 1875 (as will be seen from a return appended), exceeded £820,000 sterling.

12. The trade of the United States in the various Polynesian groups is understood to be large; and commerce with those islands is certainly capable of vast extension.

13. It is almost certain that were a Pacific cable completed to the north of New Zealand, the French Government would contribute liberally towards the connection of New Caledonia with the system; and it is probable that the Tahitian group would also soon be united.

14. The project of such a Pacific telegraph has been brought under the notice of citizens of the United States who were amongst the earliest promoters of the telegraph system, and who are earnest advocates of its extension. Intelligence received from the Agent-General for New Zealand—who recently passed through America on his way to London—warrants the assertion that by many gentlemen of the class mentioned, as well as by merchants of New York and San Francisco, such aid as the Conference directed New Zealand to ask would be regarded as a help to science and to trade, and as generally a wise concession on the part of the United States Government.

15. For these reasons, it is submitted that the application on behalf of the Conference deserves to be very favorably considered by the Government of the United States. The Commissioner suggests that at present only two questions should be dealt with, namely:—Whether, supposing fair arrangements for the great work contemplated be found possible, the United States will contribute liberally towards its cost, by which course alone its accomplishment will be made practicable; and whether the Government will authorize the landing of the cable upon that point of its territory which may be considered best suited for the purpose.

Wellington, 9th April 1877.

GEORGE McLEAN.

DECLARED VALUE of IMPORTS during 1875 from the United States to Australasia.

New South Wales	...	...	...	...	£203,539
New Zealand	...	...	...	...	213,492
Queensland	...	...	...	...	15,263
South Australia	...	...	...	...	28,502
Tasmania	...	...	...	...	5,583
Victoria	...	...	...	...	353,141
Western Australia (no return)	...	...	...	...	—
					<hr/> £819,520

[Approximate Cost of Return.—Preparation, not given; Printing (775 copies), £2 5s. 6d.]