

SUPPLEMENT ABSTRACT.

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P.88/3014.

## FROM THE PREMIER OF TASMANIA TO THE PREMIER OF VICTORIA.

Sir,

Premier's Office,

Hobart, 23rd August, 1888.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 20th instant, inquiring if this Government is prepared to contribute towards the cost of the proposed survey of a suitable route for a Pacific Telegraph Cable.

The matter shall receive early consideration.

I have, &c.,  
(Signed) P. O. FISH.

THE HONORABLE THE PREMIER OF VICTORIA.

P.88/3169.

[COPY.]

## FROM THE PREMIER OF TASMANIA TO THE PREMIER OF VICTORIA.

Sir,

Premier's Office,

Hobart, 3rd September, 1888.

In reference to your letter of the 20th ultimo, inquiring whether this Government will contribute towards the cost of the proposed survey of a route for an Ocean Telegraph Cable across the Pacific, I have the honour to enclose copy of a communication from my colleague the Treasurer, which fully explains the views of the Government.

I would specially draw your attention to the sixth paragraph of Mr. Bird's letter in regard to the subsidies paid by the contracting colonies to the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company, including the subsidies paid by New Zealand and Tasmania for their cable communication with Australia; a question which it is of importance to this colony should be definitely determined before the Government pledges itself to a large expenditure for the proposed survey.

I have, &c.,  
(Signed) P. O. FISH.

THE HONORABLE THE PREMIER OF VICTORIA.

P.88/3169.

[ENCLOSURE.]

## FROM THE TREASURER OF TASMANIA TO THE PREMIER OF VICTORIA.

THE HONORABLE THE PREMIER.

Treasury, Hobart,

3rd September, 1888.

Sir,

Referring to the letter of the Honorable the Premier of Victoria of 20th August last, relative to the proposed survey of a route for an Ocean Telegraph Cable across the Pacific, I have the honour to make the following observations:—

1. At the Postal Conference held in Sydney, a resolution was passed (New South Wales dissenting) that it is desirable to effect a survey of a suitable route for an ocean telegraph cable by way of the Pacific, the cost to be defrayed by Great Britain, Canada, and the Australasian colonies represented at the conference.

2. From the circular of Lord Knutsford, dated 1st May, 1888, and the extract from the letter of the Admiralty to the Colonial Office which accompanied the circular, it appears (a) that the *Egeria*, at a minimum cost, while surveying the Pacific, will obtain gradually very much information such as is required preliminary to the laying of a cable; (b) that the cost of making a thorough survey of the best cable route and landing-places by a vessel specially provided for the purpose would be not less than £36,000; and (c) that as no vessel is at present available for such a survey, Her Majesty's Government concur in the opinion of the Admiralty that the question of accelerating the survey must remain open until there is a prospect that the funds for the construction of the cable will be found.

3. Funds for the construction of the cable are not likely to be found until the question of route has been settled by preliminary survey, and, consequently, the position taken up by the Imperial Government appears to afford no immediate prospect of Great Britain contributing towards the expense of such a survey, except in so far as the information to be obtained by the *Egeria* in her present work may be regarded as a contribution to the desired object.

4. It appears, therefore, that if the survey is to be accelerated, it can only be by the Colonies of Australia and the Dominion of Canada undertaking the work at their joint cost, and only then if the Admiralty can supply a suitable vessel.

5. I think it very undesirable that Great Britain should be relieved of her equitable obligation to share the cost of such a work, as her interests are probably larger than those of all the countries concerned combined. If, therefore, it be the joint desire of the Colonies and Canada to press the work forward, I should advise a further urgent appeal to the Imperial Government to facilitate the survey, and bear a fair share of the cost.

6. But in any case, whether the Colonies and Canada undertake to bear the entire cost of the survey, or Great Britain bears a part thereof, I think Tasmania's consent to contribute should be conditional on the carrying out by the several Australasian Governments of the resolution of the late Postal Conference (to which Queensland alone dissented) to the effect that all the Colonies interested in the maintenance of cable communication with Great Britain should contribute on the basis of population to the subsidies paid to the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company by the several contracting Colonies, including therein the subsidies paid by New Zealand and Tasmania for the cable communication between those Colonies and Australia. At present, for the benefit of cable communication with the Colonies and Great Britain, Tasmania is paying out of all proportion to her population, as compared with the Colonies of Australia, and while this question of pooling the subsidies to the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company, in accordance with the Postal Conference Resolution, is one which should be separately urged upon the various Governments which are partially pledged to it by the resolution referred to, it is, I think, a question which should be settled antecedently to any undertaking on the part of Tasmania to contribute towards the survey of the Pacific Cable Route.

I have, &c.,  
(Signed)

B. STAFFORD BIRD,  
Treasurer.

No. 3978.

FROM THE PREMIER OF VICTORIA TO THE PREMIER OF TASMANIA.

Premier's Office,

SIR,

Melbourne, 11th September, 1888.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th instant, with enclosure from your colleague the Honorable the Treasurer, expressing the views of the Government of Tasmania with respect to the proposal for a joint contribution by the Australasian colonies towards the cost of a survey of the Pacific Ocean Cable Route, which was conveyed by my circular letter of the 20th ultimo.

2. It is with regret that I learn that your Government is indisposed (at any rate for the present) to assist in the proposed undertaking; because the only reasonable hope of securing the early execution of this important work lies in combined

action on the part of all the colonies, in pressing the matter upon the attention of the Imperial Government.

3. I beg to point out, with reference to the 5th paragraph of the Honorable Mr. Bird's letter, that there is no apparent ground for believing that Great Britain has any desire to be relieved from her equitable obligation to share the cost of such a work.

It is true that Lord Knutsford has announced the concurrence of the Imperial Government in the opinion expressed by the Lords of the Admiralty in their letter dated 4th April, namely, that the question of hastening the survey by providing a vessel, other than the *Egeria* for the work shall remain open until the Admiralty is authoritatively informed that there is a reasonable prospect that funds for the construction of the cable will be found, and that time is of importance in Imperial interests; but there is nothing to show that (when a decision is arrived at with regard to the question of the acceleration of the survey) the Imperial Government will not be prepared to contribute its quota. Indeed, the fact of the *Egeria* having been already detailed for the preliminary work of the survey seems to be strong evidence to the contrary.

4. As regards the contention that the consent of Tasmania to contribute to the proposed survey should be conditional upon effect being antecedently given to the resolution passed at the recent Postal Conference in Sydney—to the effect that *inter alia*, a division based upon population—of cost should be made between all the Colonies represented at the Conference, of the cables communicating with Tasmania and New Zealand, I beg to observe that, although the resolution quoted unquestionably deserves, and will doubtless receive full consideration at the hands of the other Colonies, it would seem scarcely wise to make its settlement an indispensable preliminary to dealing with the resolution for the survey of the Pacific Ocean Cable Route which was adopted with the concurrence of the Tasmanian representatives at the same sitting of the Conference. The question of precedence does not appear to have been raised at the time, and to press it now is to be deprecated, as opening the door to similar action on the part of other Colonies which might consider certain other special subjects deserving of precedence, and thus barring the way to one which is of undoubted importance to the interests of all.

5. Under these circumstances, I venture to request your re-consideration of the decision communicated in your letter under reply.

I have, &c.,

(Signed)

D. GILLIES,

Premier.

THE HONORABLE THE PREMIER,

Hobart.

P.88/3239.

[Copy.]

FROM THE COLONIAL SECRETARY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA TO THE PREMIER OF VICTORIA.

Colonial Secretary's Office,  
Perth, 4th September, 1888.

SIR,

With reference to your circular letter, No. 3561/88, of the 20th ultimo, relative to the proposed survey of a route for the Pacific Cable, and inquiring whether this Government would be prepared to contribute its share of the expense of such survey, I am directed by His Excellency Governor Sir F. N. Broome to reply that before expressing any opinion, this Government would be glad to learn the nature of the replies received by the Victorian Government from the Governments of the other Colonies.

I have, &c.,

MALCOLM FRASER,

THE HONORABLE THE PREMIER,  
Melbourne, Victoria.

Colonial Secretary.

P.88/3257.

FROM THE PREMIER OF QUEENSLAND TO THE PREMIER OF VICTORIA.

Chief Secretary's Office,

SIR,

Brisbane, 8th September, 1888.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 20th ultimo, in further reference to the proposed survey of a cable route between Vancouver's Island and Australia, and to inform you that this Government is now prepared to contribute toward the cost of the undertaking.

I have, &amp;c.,

THE HONORABLE THE PREMIER OF VICTORIA,  
Melbourne.

THOMAS McILWRAITH.

P.88/3262.

FROM THE PREMIER OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA TO THE PREMIER OF VICTORIA.

Chief Secretary's Office,

SIR,

Adelaide, 12th September, 1888.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your circular letter of the 20th ultimo, referring to previous correspondence relative to the desirableness of a survey being made of a suitable route for an Ocean Telegraph Cable by way of the Pacific, and to the resolution of the Postal Conference held in Sydney in January last on the same subject.

In reply, I beg to inform you that this Government does not propose contributing towards the cost of the survey referred to.

I have, &amp;c.,

THE HONORABLE THE PREMIER,  
Victoria.

T. PLAYFORD.