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Synopsis: Banquet for Todd on return from Europe. Todd praised.

Summary: His impressions of Europe and mentions telegraphy, electricity, lighting, telephony (including stats), post and meteorology where SA observations are " best in the southern hemisphere"

BANQUET TO MR. C. TODD, C.M.G.

On Monday evening, May 31, about 150 officials in the Postal and Telegraph Department attended a banquet in the Albert Hall given to welcome back to the colony the Postmaster-General (Mr. C. Todd, C.M.G.) who had been on a visit to England in connection with postal matters. Mr. E. Squire (the Deputy Postmaster General) occupied the chair, and had on his right the guest of the evening and on his left the Minister of Education (Hon. Dr. Cockburn). Mr. R. R. Knuckey was Vice-Chairman, and the company included the heads of all the sub departments and many officials from the country, while other country officers apologized for their absence. Mr. Todd was greeted with loud cheers on entering the room.

After an excellent dinner, provided by Mr G. Flecker, had been disposed of, the Chairman submitted " The Queen and Royal Family." He said it must be gratifying to all her subjects that Her Majesty was now beginning to mingle with her subjects. All would be glad here if we had an opportunity of welcoming her son to the colony.

The Chairman proposed "The Governor," and said he was sure His Excellency had the good of the colony at heart. (Hear, hear.) The toast was honoured, and the Chairman then gave "Our Guest." He said it was a little over thirteen months since they met to bid farewell to Mr. Todd, and every officer was pleased to be present to greet him on his return. (Hear, hear.) The officers had come from all parts of the country where it had been possible, and they had greetings from the officers of the central section of the Overland Telegraph line and the northern section as well, and those who were not present with them in the body were present in the spirit. They had only one regret, that was that Mr. Todd did not devote more of his holiday to rest and recreation. (Hear, hear) The greater part of his time was taken up in visiting the various establishments and different departments where he knew he could gather information which would be valuable to the colony on his return. They all knew that Mr. Todd had been commissioned by the Government to represent South Australia at the Berlin Conference, and he did good work there. (Hear, hear.) Those of them who had been associated with him for many years— and most of them had been with him now for many years— knew how indefatigable he was when any work was to be done. (Hear, hear.) They also knew that as the head of the department he would keep his department abreast of the times. He would tell them his experience at home. He found that they were by no means behind the departments in the old country and on the Continent. Mr. Todd during his stay in England was the guest of the Royal Astronomical Society, who delighted to do him honour. (Hear, hear.) They were well acquainted with his scientific labours here, and appreciated at a proper value his observations on the two transits' of Venus. He was the honoured guest of many other Societies, and they all rejoiced to see the high honour that was paid to him at the University of Cambridge in making him an honorary Master of Arts. (Cheers.) This was an honour so seldom conferred on any one that he believed there were only nine persons living who had enjoyed the honour. These included Professors Molten and Huxley and the late Professor Darwin, the author of "The Origin of Species." They almost felt as if the honour had been conferred on themselves. (Hear, hear.) He was sure they were all delighted to see him back again, and hoped that for many years he would occupy the position of chief of their departments. (Applause.) The toast was drunk with musical honours.

Mr. C. Todd, C.M.G. (who was received with cheers), in responding, said that although he did not set himself up as a nervous man the kindly way in which the toast had been received certainly made him feel somewhat nervous. He supposed it was the depth of his feelings that made him feel nervous. There was one thing he could assure them, that was that he had the greatest pleasure to be once more with them. (Applause.) When he was walking down to the Post-Office the first day after his return to the colony he felt that the day he had left was but as yesterday, and that what had occurred during the interval was but as a dream. It was also a very pleasant dream, because it reminded him of

the dear old mother country which he had visited, forming reunions with old friends, some of whom he had left boys and girls, but returned and found them grandfathers and grandmothers. Everywhere he went he was received with the greatest kindness and cordiality, but he did not know of anything which touched him more than the way he was received by his grand old chief, Sir George Airy, the ex Astronomer Royal. Perhaps they were not aware that after he left school he joined the Royal Observatory at Greenwich in December, 1841, as a cadet. He received a letter at Plymouth asking him to become the guest of the Royal Astronomical Society. He was sorry the letter was too late, because he would have liked to have seen the progress made at the Royal Observatory since he left for the colony.. He referred to his voyage home, and mentioned that at Colombo he met Major Fergusson, who still exhibited a lively interest in South Australian affairs. At Suez he was struck by the immense power and magnificence of Britain as revealed in the magnitude of her commerce. (Hear, hear) He would take that opportunity of publicly acknowledging the great kindness and assistance he received from the Agent-General from the day of his arrival in England to the day of his departure. Sir Arthur Blyth was the first to welcome and the last to bid him good-by (Hear, hear.) As the Berlin Conference did not take place until August he had some time to spare in which to enjoy himself, but he could truthfully say that nowhere had he more thoroughly enjoyed himself than visiting the Inventions Exhibition. It was the grandest collection ever got together in any part of the world. Never before had anything of the sort been seen, and perhaps never would again. (Hear, hear.) Being connected with the Electric Telegraph Department and the electrical world he was very much interested in the electric light. There was one of the grandest exhibitions of the electric light it was possible to conceive. There were between 50,000 and 60,000 incandescent glow lights and 454 arc lights, some of which were equal to a candle-power of 6,000 candles. The spectacle produced by these illuminations at night in the different parts of the ground and along the different passages was indescribably brilliant, and showed to advantage the pitch of excellence to which the different lights had been brought. Another thing connected with the "Inventions" was a splendid fountain in the centre of a quadrangle. The magnitude of the fountain might be judged from the fact that the consumption of water was 70,000 gallons an hour; with all the jets playing 4,000 gallons of water were used every fifteen seconds, rather too much for a dry country like this. (Hear, hear.) Under a sky light were five or six arc lights utilized to illuminate the fountain. It was a striking spectacle just as twilight was fading to see all the brilliant lights suddenly burst into illumination in response to a wave of the hand from Sir Francis Bolton or one of his operators stationed in the light tower. These lights were varied in character and beautiful in design. The electric-lighting in connection with the Exhibition was one of the grandest sights and most rational amusements that could possibly be afforded the hundreds of thousands of people who witnessed it, and was admirably calculated to keep the masses from crowding into the gin -palaces (Applause.) He was much struck by the great improvements made in London since he left there thirty-five years ago. The Chairman had referred to the honour done him at Cambridge ; this was one of the things that had touched him very closely. He did not know whether they were aware he was one of the Assistant Astronomers at Cambridge, and one of the earliest observers of the planet Neptune. It was his friend Professor Adams who was one of the discoverers of the planet at that time, and it was a very pleasant matter for him to be honoured as he was. On every occasion excepting one he had the pleasure of being the special guest of the Royal Astronomical Society Club. Although it seemed like self gratulation he might mention that the Astronomer Royal, who was almost a boy in pinafores when he left England, kindly persisted in proposing his health on every occasion. Again he had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of the Dynamicals Club. These were a number of gentlemen who did not go in for dynamite outrages, but made the machines which manufactured the electricity to lighten our streets, factories, &c. At the same time they were a "dianamical set of fellows." (Oh.) He met Cyrus Field, who conducted him to inspect some capital ships which had just been launched by the Telegraph Construction Company. As the time was the twenty-seventh-anniversary of the laying of the first Atlantic cable in 1858, Mr. Cyrus Field held a large dinner party at the Star and Garter Hotel. This place, he might mention, had altered very much since, as a young man, he used to rest there after a row on the river. (Hear, hear.) He found that the hotels in England had generally assumed a very altered appearance since he first came out to the colony. There were larger and grander buildings, and obtained considerable fame. On his visit to the Star and Garter he met a larger assembly of gentlemen connected with telegraphic enterprise than he had ever met before. Some were old veterans in the work, but they must remember, however, that only forty-one years had passed since the telegraph became an established fact (Hear, hear.)

He next proceeded to Berlin to attend a Conference on international telegraphs. This was the first occasion on which any of the Australian Colonies had been represented at any International Conference, and that fact drew general attention to the colonies, perhaps more than had ever been bestowed on them before. (Applause.) On all sides he was beset with enquiries as to the condition and prospects of Australia, and he must say that, although South Australians were as a rule modest, he felt inclined to "blow" a great deal on that occasion. (Applause and laughter.) He did not speak of our depression, but only of our prosperity. (Applause.) The Postmaster-General for the German Empire (Dr. Stephan) presided at the Conference, and all the discussions were carried on in French. Some of the delegates made a mess of it. (Laughter.) In their seats they were arranged alphabetically, and so he found himself associated with delegates from Austria and Egypt ; while Mr. Murray Smith, of Victoria, and Mr. Cracknell, of New South Wales, were also mixed up amongst foreigners. But they fought their various battles bravely, and did their best to bring down the prices of telegrams, so that telegraph communication might be made more accessible to all classes. The result of their efforts would soon be made manifest. On July 1 the charge for Press telegrams from Australia to Great Britain would be at the rate of 2s. 8d. per word, and a reduction would be made in ordinary messages of perhaps 1s 4d. only in the first instance, but he felt quite sure that with the arrival of Mr. Murray Smith, on his return to Victoria, the reduction would be increased to 2s 8d. per word. (Applause.) They found India a great thorn in their side, and at the request of his colleagues he addressed a message to the Governor- General of India with a view to bring about a reduction of the exorbitant transit rates prevailing there. As an instance he might say that although the local telegraph charge between Bombay and Madras was only 2½d. per word we had to pay 7½d. As a portion of the great British Empire, surely we had a strong claim upon the Government of India to be treated on a more equitable basis. (Hear, hear.) The International Telegraph Convention was established through the efforts of Dr. Stephan to bring about a uniform system of transacting international business, the special object of Germany being to bring about a uniform cheap rate within the European system ; but unfortunately for the German scheme it clashed with the interests not only of many of the outside States belonging to the Union but also still more so with the Cable Companies, which had to look after their share holders' dividends. Therefore the extreme measures proposed by Germany could not be carried out, but a reasonable compromise was effected, which would tend to a reduction in the telegraph charges between the nations of Europe. A great deal of good was done by the Conference, and there is great promise for the future. (Applause.) He was much impressed with the manner in which the operations of the telegraph and telephone were carried on in Germany. Wherever his friends and he went they were treated most royally. The towns visited vied with one another to outdo the hospitality they showed. The German Government had awakened to the growing importance of Australia, and as a proof of this they had subsidized the North German Lloyd's Company to come here and fleece us of our wool. (Applause and laughter.) They visited Hamburg, and were shown over an interesting observatory. On their return the banks of the Elbe were illuminated. Among other pleasant days was one spent at Potsdam. A flatter and more uninteresting stretch of country than that between Berlin and Hanover and around Berlin it was impossible to conceive. In Germany the railway stations, post-offices, and other public buildings were most imposing, and the people had a great rage for building palaces. In connection with the postal and telegraph service they had established a museum containing a most interesting collection. (Applause). In it were represented the modes in which the mails were carried in every nation from the early days down to the present time; the earliest and the modern forms of telegraph instruments ; all kinds of railway carriages, and various other appliances. At the Berlin Post-Office he saw a date-stamping machine which was capable of stamping 600 letters per minute. The main telegraph wires in Germany were underground ; the cables were buried without being placed in pipes ; but all the local lines were mostly overhead. The objection to the underground system was that it very greatly reduced the speed of working. The organization of working in Berlin was as perfect as it could be, but the adoption of the underground system and the Hughes instrument; reduced the speed of working very considerably below what it is in this colony and in England. While in Berlin he witnessed a grand review of 25,000 troops, all of whom had a fine physique, and as a body contrasted very markedly with the small men he saw in France. But while feeling some amount of enthusiasm on looking at the men, he was saddened at the idea that they had been trained for purposes of slaughter. He hoped never to see a large army in Australia. (Hear, hear.) Subsequently they went to Dresden, and were charmed with its picture gallery, in which he saw Raphael's Madonna, from which he could scarcely draw himself away. They then made their way to Frankfort, and had a trip down the Rhine. While in Germany he made some enquiries into the price of

labour. He found that to a large extent mechanics worked from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m., having half an hour for breakfast, one hour for dinner, and half an hour for tea. They worked the same on Saturdays as on other days, and their wages were from a mark to a mark and a half per day, less than the wage paid to an Englishman doing the same kind of work. After visiting Cologne they went to Paris, where they remained twelve days. He went over the Postal and Telegraph Departments and the Telephone Exchange. The latter was about the best he had seen. Availing themselves of the sewers the people were able to have wire circuits instead of earth circuits. In Paris there were 12 telephone exchanges, with 3,800 subscribers. As to telephone exchanges generally, in England they were in the hands of Companies, in Germany the Government, in Paris Companies apart from the Post Office. In London with its 5,000,000 inhabitants there were only 4,000 subscribers in Liverpool 1,200 with an annual subscription of £20 each. At Berlin there were 4,076 subscribers, with 8 exchanges. In the whole of Germany there were 98 exchanges, having 12,665 subscribers. On his return to England he was unfortunately laid up, and could make no further scientific inspections. Nothing pleased him better than the admirable order and organization which characterized the working of the British post-offices. In London it was really a grand sight at the General Post-Office between half-past 5 and 8 o'clock. The authorities did all they could to provide facilities for the public. He narrated his inspection of the method of dispatch of the mails and mail trains from London. As to telegraphing in England, the Government in October last year reduced the charges from 1s. for twenty words, excluding the address, to 6d. for ten words, including the address, to any part of the kingdom. The consequence was that during the five months immediately following 13,842,831 messages were sent, compared with 9,323,078 messages during the corresponding period of the previous year, but the receipts had fallen from £499,623 to £465,522. He visited the leading observatories in England, and was very glad to find that the transit of Venus observations he took in 1874 were amongst the most valuable of any taken in any part of the world. (Loud applause.) He was glad to receive an expression from Mr. Scott, President of the Royal Meteorological Society, that our meteorological observations were deemed to be the best in the Southern Hemisphere. (Applause.) In concluding he trusted that our relations with the old country would always continue to be of the most amiable character. He again thanked them for the reception they had accorded him. (Loud and prolonged applause.) Mr. Todd then proposed "The Chairman." He referred to Mr. Squire's able conduct of the departments during his absence, and said he was so well assisted by the officers of the various departments that he almost felt there was no need for him to return. (No.) Mr. Squire had been so long associated with the department and was so highly appreciated that nothing was required to recommend the toast to those present. He was sorry there was so much depression in the colony at the present time, but her great resources and the pluck and energy of the people would cause South Australia to emerge from the cloud. He believed at the same time that the depression would teach a lesson to many people that it was a mistake to make too great haste to be rich. Nothing was so bad as for any one to speculate beyond the means of the individual. The toast having been honoured, the Chairman acknowledged the sentiment, and returned thanks for the kind remarks of the proposer and the enthusiastic reception. He made up his mind when he took charge of the department to do his best, and was glad that his action met with the approval of Mr. Todd. He had every advantage in the department having been brought to such a pitch of perfection by Mr. Todd that he only had to keep matters going. He had been ably helped by all the officers of the department. (Hear, hear.) It was the greatest compliment to the head of a department that things went smoothly while he was away. It showed the capital organization and testified to the efficiency of the heads of the departments. He then proposed "The Sub-heads of the Departments coupling with it the names of Messrs, Waddy and Wright." Those gentlemen responded, and Mr. Beaton gave, the "Vice - Chairman." "The Country Post and Telegraph Officers" was proposed by Mr. Watson and responded to by Messrs. Bastard (Hindmarsh) and Croft (Mount Gambier). The "Press" was also honoured, and the proceedings terminated after midnight. During the evening some capital songs were contributed, and a string band enhanced the pleasure of the gathering.