MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

MONDAY, 20TH MAY, 1912.

The Conference met at 11.30 a.m., and the members were welcomed and addressed by the Minister of State for Home Affairs.

Mr. Allan A. Spowers proposed that, following the usual custom of the delegates from the Surveyors' Boards, the Surveyor-General of the State in which they met, Mr. J. M. Reed, Surveyor-General, Victoria, be appointed to the chair.

Seconded by Mr. E. A. Counsel, and unanimously agreed to.

It was agreed that Mr. H. E. Finney act as Secretary to the Conference.

The Chairman read a telegram received from Mr. H. F. Johnstone, Surveyor-General of Western Australia, regretting his inability to attend the Conference. This was subsequently acknowledged by the Chairman, on behalf of the Board.

The Secretary read the Minute of the Minister for Home Affairs, dated the 22nd November, 1911, convening the Conference.

It was agreed, on the motion of the Chairman, that the voting power of each representation to the Conference should be equal.

It was also agreed, on the motion of Mr. Mackenzie, that Mr. C. E. Adams, Government Astronomer, Dominion of New Zealand, should be permitted to assist in the deliberations of the Conference, but without the power of voting on the resolutions.

On the suggestion of the Chairman, it was agreed that Mr. Scrivener be asked to take the whole business paper, and give a general idea of the purpose of the meeting, and that discussion follow. Mr. Scrivener then read a memorandum (Appendix A) dealing with the subjects to be brought before the Conference for consideration.

1. GEODETIC SURVEY OF AUSTRALIA.

The discussion upon the above subject was opened.

Mid-day adjournment.

A report upon the Trigonometrical Survey of New South Wales was read by Mr. Poate (Appendix B) and the discussion was resumed.

On the motion of Mr. Counsel, seconded by Mr. Poate, the following resolution was agreed to :—

That, in the opinion of this Conference, it is desirable that a Geodetic Survey of Australia should be undertaken.

It was also resolved that :

Messrs. Mackenzie, Poate, Scrivener, and Spowers form a Committee to prepare draft resolutions to give effect to the views of the Conference.

2. REVISION OF THE MAP OF AUSTRALIA NOW IN COURSE OF PREPARATION WITH REGARD PRINCIPALLY TO THE NOMENCLATURE.

After discussion, it was moved by Mr. Poate, seconded by Mr. Counsel, and unanimously agreed to by the Conference :

(*a*) That the proofs of the Commonwealth Map of Australia be referred to the respective Surveyors-General for revision, inviting them to confer with the local Geographical Society and Marine Authorities. Map when revised to be adopted for present use.

(*b*) That later the Map be referred to the Admiralty and the Royal Geographical Society of England for suggestions.

(*c*) Final review of the Map to be made by a Committee of the Surveyors-General of the States and the Director of Commonwealth Lands and Surveys.

Adjourned until Tuesday ; the Committee to meet at 10 a.m., and the ordinary business of the Conference to be gone on with at 11 a.m.

TUESDAY, 21ST MAY, 1912.

The Committee having met at 10 a.m. and drafted the resolutions, the Conference sat at 11 a.m.

The minutes of the first day's meeting were read and confirmed, and copies of same, together with transcribed shorthand notes of the discussions, distributed to members.

At the suggestion of the Chairman, it was decided that the transcribed shorthand notes of each day's proceedings should not be finally printed in full, but that copies should be kept as a record by the members, and that a digest of them should accompany the resolutions of the Conference.

On the motion of the Chairman, it was also decided that resolutions arrived at as the Conference proceeded should be communicated to the Press.

The Conference proceeded with the discussion on the draft resolutions drawn up by the Committee (in support of the motion that a Geodetic Survey should be undertaken).

The following resolutions were fully discussed, revised, and, on the motion of Mr. Poate, seconded by Mr. Spowers, unanimously adopted:—

(3) That, in order to give effect to the foregoing resolution, this Conference respectfully recommends that such survey be undertaken by the Commonwealth Government, and submits in support thereof the following reasons :—

(*a*) That the time has arrived when the Commonwealth should take its place in the scientific investigations of the world, not the least important of which are the determination of the figure of the earth, its density, and other cognate matters.

(*b*) That work of this character, involving the highest form of survey, should be effected under the supreme authority of Australia, as it is essential that it should be carried out with the greatest degree of accuracy on an uniform basis and a definite plan, the individual parts being co-ordinated and eventually forming one homogeneous whole.

(*c*) That the system which has hitherto prevailed by which the individual States carried out this work with instruments of varying character has resulted in divergent standards of accuracy, rendering the work, to a great extent, unsatisfactory, and, though much of it is of high grade, portions of it are impossible of reconciliation and co-ordination with a Continental scheme.

(*d*) That the desirableness of this work being undertaken by the Commonwealth Government is evidenced by the fact that the Geodetic Survey of the United States is carried out under the direct control of the Federal Government, and that the South African Geodetic Survey is also under one central control.

(*e*) That such survey is absolutely necessary for the production of accurate maps, will be of high value in connexion with cadastral and geological surveys, and form a basis for topographical work for defence and other purposes. It will, moreover, provide a standard of accuracy for surveys of every description throughout the Commonwealth.

(*f*) That it will afford an invaluable base to which settlement surveys already effected can be connected, providing data for re-establishing boundaries, which, with increasing density of settlement, becomes a matter of great importance. Further, as regards the sparsely occupied areas of Australia, such a survey, if carried out in advance of settlement, will be of the greatest utility and assistance in effecting the settlement surveys which can at any future time be reproduced with a minimum error and at a relatively low cost, preventing litigation consequent upon other methods.

It was moved by Mr. Counsel, seconded by Mr. Mackenzie, and carried unanimously :

That the Geodetic Survey referred to in the resolutions submitted by the Committee shall embrace the Geodetic and Major Triangulation only.

Mid-day adjournment.

3. DISCUSSION ON THE PARTICIPATION OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND IN THE PRODUCTION OF A MAP OF THE WORLD ON THE SCALE OF 1–1,000,000.

Mr. Scrivener continued his report in regard to this matter.

The report of the International Map Committee of 22nd November, 1909, was referred to by the Chairman, who read extracts from the report.

After consideration and discussion on this subject, it was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Spowers, and carried unanimously :

That the preparation of the portion of the map of the world, embracing the Commonwealth of Australia and the Dominion of New Zealand on a scale of 1 in 1,000,000, is a work that should be undertaken by the Commonwealth and the Dominion of New Zealand. As New Zealand is in a position to do its own portion, this Conference recommends that the work, as regards Australia, should be carried out under the direction of the Commonwealth Government, the respective States being asked to provide all available information.

4. ISSUE OF LICENCES BY THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT AND RECIPROCITY BETWEEN THE SEVERAL STATES, THE DOMINION OF NEW ZEALAND, AND THE COMMONWEALTH.

After debate, it was agreed, on the motion of Mr. Counsel, seconded by Mr. Mackenzie :

That this Conference is of opinion that, as soon as the Commonwealth Government gives necessary authority for the creation of a Board of Examiners for Surveyors operating in Commonwealth Territory, such Board should be admitted to the reciprocal arrangement now existing between the various States and the Dominion of New Zealand, and recommends that this resolution be referred for the consideration of the reciprocating Boards.

Adjourned until 10 a.m., Wednesday, 22nd May, 1912.

WEDNESDAY, 22ND MAY, 1912.

The Conference met at 10 a.m.

Minutes read, amended, and confirmed.

5. COMMONWEALTH LANDS TITLES OFFICE.

The Conference decided that consideration of this subject be adjourned until Thursday, 23rd May, 1912.

6. THE DESIRABLENESS OF UNIFORMITY IN THE DECLARATION MADE BY SURVEYORS ON PLANS OF SURVEY UNDER THE VARIOUS LANDS ACTS AND TORRENS ACT.

After debate, Mr. Counsel moved, and Mr. Smith seconded, the following resolution, which was carried unanimously :—

This Conference recommends (as regards surveys under the Real Property Acts) for the favorable consideration of the Surveyors' Boards of the States the form of certificate as expressed in the Authorized Surveyors' Declaration for Land Transfer Surveys in New Zealand, viz. :—

I, of , licensed surveyor, do solemnly and sincerely declare that this plan has been made from surveys executed by me (or under my own personal supervision, inspection, and field check), and that both plan and survey are correct, and have been made in accordance with the regulations of the Surveyors' Board, dated

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of the provisions of

Declared at &c.

No resolution was adopted regarding the form of certificate under the various Lands Acts.

7. THE CARRYING OUT OF SURVEYS BY THE SEVERAL STATES FOR THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT.

After discussion, it was resolved by the Conference, on the motion of Mr. Poate, seconded by Mr. Counsel:

That the procedure to be adopted in connexion with such surveys as may be effected by the States for the Commonwealth should be as follows :—

(*a*) That, in order to avoid delay, the Director of Commonwealth Lands and Surveys and the Surveyors-General of the States should be authorized to communicate direct with one another in connexion with such surveys.

(*b*) That full particulars as to the required surveys should be supplied to the Surveyor-General of the State in which the survey is desired, with a request that the survey should be made.

(*c*) That the Surveyor-General should supply necessary detailed information for the use of the surveyor, and issue requisite instructions.

(*d*) That the surveyor should carry out the survey in accordance with State regulations, and supply certified plan and field notes in duplicate.

(*e*) That the State officials should examine the plan and the Surveyor-General (or other authorized officer) certify in the usual manner, both as to plans and accounts, and then transmit one plan with one copy of field notes to the Director, retaining the other plan and copy of field notes for State record purposes.

(*f*) That the Commonwealth should pay all costs, both field and office.

Midday adjournment.

8. THE SPELLING OF NAMES OF AUSTRALIAN PLACES.

The consideration of this subject was then proceeded with.

The Chairman read extracts from correspondence leading up to the decision to refer the matter for consideration of the Conference.

Discussion ensued, and it was resolved on the motion of Mr. Scrivener, seconded by Mr. Smith, that:

In the opinion of this Conference it is desirable that, as far as practicable, the system of orthography adopted by the Royal Geographical Society, the Colonial and Foreign Service, the Admiralty, and War Office, for native names should be adopted, as well as an uniform method of spelling Australian place names.

The Conference adjourned until 9.30 a.m., Thursday morning.

THURSDAY, 23RD MAY, 1912.

The Conference met at 9.30 a.m.

Minutes read, amended, and confirmed.

5. Consideration was then given to Subject 5 of the Agenda Paper, namely :—

"COMMONWEALTH LANDS TITLES OFFICE,"

discussion on which had been adjourned from the previous day.

After a brief debate on this matter, it was resolved, on the motion of Mr. Poate, seconded by Mr. Spowers, that:

The Surveyors-General would, as far as possible, furnish the Director of Commonwealth Lands and Surveys with information regarding "Lands Titles" methods in their respective States, and no further action was considered necessary.

The Chairman announced that this concluded the general business set down on the Agenda Paper for discussion, and, as there were no questions brought forward by members of sufficient importance to demand action by the Commonwealth Government, it was agreed that the Conference should adjourn until 9.30 a.m. on Saturday, 25th May.

That Friday, 24th May, be devoted to the preparation of a formal report covering the resolutions, and to a general revision of proofs.

That the report be brought up for consideration and revision on Saturday.

SATURDAY, 25TH MAY, 1912.

The Conference met at 9.30 a.m.

Members present :—Messrs. J. M. Reed, Chairman ; James Mackenzie ; C. E. Adams ; Fred. Poate ; and E. A. Counsel.

The minutes of Thursday's meeting were read and confirmed.

Another resolution in relation to Geodetic Survey was proposed for adoption, and, on the motion of Mr. Poate, seconded by Mr. Spowers, was unanimously agreed to, viz. :

That, in view of the precision with which the base lines of New Zealand have been measured, it is desirable that the New Zealand survey shall be brought into line with the Geodetic Surveys of the world by the use of instruments capable of carrying out the angular work with an equal degree of accuracy, and so that the present Trigonometrical Survey may be strengthened by a series of main triangles.

The Conference then proceeded to consider the report which had been prepared on Friday by Messrs. Scrivener, Reed, and Spowers, and, after perusal, it was adopted and signed by the members present.

This concluded the business of the Conference.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Conference, expressed appreciation of the services rendered by Mr. H. E. Finney, who, assisted by Mr. C. Seddon, had performed the secretarial duties.

Mr. Mackenzie, in moving a vote of thanks to the Chairman, stated that the results attained by the Conference, which, if carried out by the authorities concerned, would be productive of much good, were largely due to Mr. Reed's tact and industry in conducting the duties of the Chair ; the gathering had been a pleasant one, and he ventured to hope that the next Conference would be held in New Zealand, where the members would be warmly welcomed.

Mr. Poate, in seconding the motion, endorsed his appreciation of the manner in which the Chairman had guided the meetings, thus leading to a satisfactory conclusion of their labours.

Mr. Adams, Mr. Spowers, and Mr. Counsel also expressed their appreciation; and Mr. Reed, in reply, said that the effect of the amicable way in which the subjects had been discussed was reflected in the resolutions, all of which had been adopted unanimously. He felt sure that the opportunity given for so many professional gentlemen to meet in conference would prove mutually beneficial.

The Conference then waited on the Minister of Home Affairs to inform him that they had concluded their proceedings, and would submit a report in due course. An acknowledgment was also made of the courtesies that had been extended to the members by the Commonwealth Government.

No. 1.—GEODETIC SURVEY OF AUSTRALIA.

Discussion.

Mr. MACKENZIE.—In New Zealand, it was looked upon as a necessity to have a trigonometrical survey. Mr. J. T. Thomson started the work in the early fifties, and when he became Surveyor-General of New Zealand, in 1876, it was vigorously pushed forward well in advance of settlement. I regard it as impossible to carry out survey work satisfactorily without a trigonometrical survey, and our successive Dominion Governments have always approved of it without question as being the first essential in all settlement operations. It has never been claimed for the New Zealand triangulation that it possesses the high scientific status of the geodetic surveys of other countries, but it has always been practical and was also sufficiently accurate to govern all classes of detail surveys. The outstanding difference between our Dominion work and that of the Australian States, excepting perhaps South Australia, is that we bring it into everyday use, our reconnaissance and trigonometrical surveys being the real forerunners of settlement, whilst in Australia, though the surveys are often highly scientific, there has been much less practical application, neither have these surveys been a factor in the settlement problem.

I cannot help thinking that had New Zealand's way of keeping the practical uses of triangulation more to the front been adopted, Australian legislators would have looked upon the work more kindly, and any resolutions we pass should voice this side of the question.

Mr. SPOWERS.—At the present time there is no trigonometrical vote in Queensland, and only a very small area is covered by the major triangulation which was carried out about 1890. In addition to other reasons we are greatly in need of this survey to assist us in the correct compilation of our maps; much time is now lost and expense incurred in endeavouring to make accurate maps from information that is faulty or altogether wanting. We are in the unenviable position of being about the only civilized nation that has not an accurate trigonometrical survey. The work is rightly one for the Commonwealth Government to undertake.

Mr. MACKENZIE.—There is no doubt as to the necessity for it.

The CHAIRMAN.—Victoria is covered to a great extent by triangulation carried out under the direction of Mr. Ellery, but unfortunately settlement preceded that survey and little use has been made of it. Geodetic lines have also been run to afford a check on settlement surveys.

Mr. SMITH.—In South Australia, the trigonometrical survey was commenced in 1839, and was continued until 1892. It, to a great extent, preceded settlement, and has been found extremely useful in determining the positions of run boundaries, and as a check upon settlement surveys.

Mr. COUNSEL.—Triangulation was in Tasmania commenced in 1833, and continued for some years. The major triangulation extended over the greater part of the State. Doubts were expressed as to the accuracy of the survey, which was never connected with the cadastral or block surveys, and it has never been made use of except in the compilation of maps, though some expense has been incurred in establishing new and re-establishing old stations. Much accuracy is claimed for the work.