

No. 16.

His Excellency the ADMINISTRATOR to the SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES.

(No. 90.)

MY LORD,— Government House, Wellington, 13th November, 1882.

With reference to my telegraphic Despatch of the 4th November instant, in reply to your Lordship's Circular Despatch of the 6th September, 1882, respecting postal arrangements between France and the Australian Colonies, I have the honour to enclose a memorandum, signed by Mr. Atkinson (the Colonial Treasurer), in the absence of the Premier, covering a memorandum by the Secretary to the General Post Office (Mr. Gray,) addressed to the Minister at the head of the Department. A.-2, No. 11.

The latter memorandum, containing in detail the views of the Government of the Colony on the subject, is transmitted to your Lordship as a general reply to your Lordship's former Despatches, viz., Circulars, 7th October, 1880, and No. 29, 6th July, 1881, as well as to the recent Circular Despatch of the 6th September, 1882.

I have, &c.,

JAMES PRENDERGAST.

The Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Enclosure.

MEMORANDUM for His EXCELLENCY.

DESPATCHES respecting a proposed arrangement as to postal rates between France and the Australasian Colonies are returned herewith.

Ministers respectfully advise His Excellency to inform the Secretary of State, that the New Zealand Government will consent to come under the arrangement, subject to the conditions stated in the accompanying memorandum by the Secretary to the Post Office, forwarded herewith for His Excellency's information.

As a reply by telegraph is requested by Lord Kimberley, a draft telegram is appended for See No. 13. His Excellency's consideration.

H. A. ATKINSON,

Wellington, 4th November, 1882.

In the absence of the Premier.

Sub-Enclosure.

The Hon. the Postmaster-General.

INEFFECTUAL attempts have for some time been made to reduce the postage on correspondence to and from France. In the majority of cases, the proposals were made by the French Post Office, and the failures must be attributed to the fact that the reduction of postage as proposed by France would favour that country at the expense of the Colonies. Counter and more equitable proposals were made on behalf of the Colonies, but, as these were rejected by France, the high rates of postage have been permitted to continue. The postage on letters for France is 1s. 1d. per half-ounce *viâ* Brindisi and Modane, 11d. *viâ* Alexandria and Marseilles, and 1d. per ounce on printed matter. Of the letter rates, New Zealand retains only 6d. per half-ounce, the balance being paid over to France for sea and overland transit to destination from Galle and Alexandria and Brindisi and Marseilles respectively: but we keep the whole of the postage on printed matter, the addressees being mulcted in charges sufficient to cover cost of delivery from British packet to destination. In the bulk, France is credited with 1d. per ounce for the letters sent *viâ* Alexandria and Marseilles, and 1 franc 30 cents. per ounce on letters when forwarded *via* Brindisi, but, as already stated, nothing is credited France on the printed matter. Letters for France, when sent *viâ* San Francisco and England, are charged 8d. per half-ounce, 6d. being retained by New Zealand, and the 2d. paid London for carriage from England to France. On the other hand, out of the postage collected by France, we are credited with 1 franc 66 cents. per 30 grammes for sea conveyance to destination, or about 1s. 4d. per ounce, and about 5d. per lb. on printed matter. Unpaid or partly prepaid correspondence is charged double the deficiency, which is recovered from addressees, and, in the case of the latter description, no credit is given for any stamps affixed.

The French Government being about to establish a new line of mail steamers to the East, which will touch at some of the principal ports of Australia, the Director-General of French Posts considered the occasion a favourable one for again endeavouring to bring about a mutual understanding with the Australian Colonies, in effecting a reduction of postage on correspondence between the Colonies and France. Indeed, an agreement has been entered into with France and Great Britain, in anticipation of the Colonies agreeing to the proposals, and the several Australian Governments are now asked to express their concurrence or otherwise. The proposal fixes the postage at 6d. per half-ounce on letters, books and newspapers at 1d. per two ounces, whether sent *viâ* Brindisi or Marseilles. New Zealand will be required to pay France 25 francs