

No. 32.

The Hon. the PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 30th August, 1900.

I have the honour to confirm the telegram, copy of which is attached [No. 9], on the subject of the proposed introduction of universal penny postage by this colony.

I also enclose copies of telegrams,—From the Colonial Office to His Excellency the Governor [No. 23], and between the Postmaster-General at London and the Hon. Mr. Ward [Nos. 5, 8, 15], and copy of a memorandum from myself to the Governor in reply to the telegram from the Colonial Office.

You will observe that the question was raised whether Imperial or universal penny postage was intended, and Mr. Ward's telegram to the Postmaster-General, London, will make it clear that the latter was meant. The Government was, of course, aware that letters at the penny rate could only be exchanged with foreign countries under the provisions of the Postal Union Convention, and by way of preliminary action the Director-General of the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union at Berne was apprised by cable of the intention of this colony to establish the universal rate. You will perhaps consider it advisable to inform the London postal authorities of this, and at the same time to ask whether Her Majesty's Postmaster-General would be disposed to use his influence with the International Office and the Post Offices of the principal foreign countries in order that New Zealand might be enabled to extend its penny-postage scheme as widely as possible. It is, of course, understood that the Imperial Post Office offers every encouragement to the introduction of the penny post throughout the Empire, and I do not doubt that the colonies concerned have already been communicated with by the Marquess of Londonderry, in order that, at the least, New Zealand may be enabled to participate in the Imperial penny-post arrangements by the beginning of the new year.

As regards the Australian Colonies, it is probable that, owing to the near approach of federation, it may be some time yet before the Federal Government determines whether it will fall in with New Zealand. The appreciative telegrams, however, from the principal colonies in the group, and the generally expressed wish for a penny post within the Commonwealth, encourage me in the hope that the penny postage may be adopted by Australia.

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I have, &c.,

J. G. WARD,

For the Premier.

The Hon. W. P. Reeves, Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

No. 33.

The Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington, to the Right Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, London.

MY LORD MARQUESS,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 30th August, 1900.

I have the honour to confirm my telegram of the 18th instant, advising you that this colony would introduce universal penny postage on the 1st January next, and to thank you for your Lordship's cordial reply.

My second telegram of the 20th idem would make it clear that universal, as distinct from Imperial, penny postage was intended. I was, of course, aware of the difficulties attending the establishing of a penny post beyond Her Majesty's dominions, but with every confidence that the acceptance of the scheme throughout the Empire was assured, the time seemed opportune to bring forward the larger question, in the hope that at least the United States, as being the principal foreign country with which New Zealand has direct postal relations, would agree to exchange letters at 1d., as it does with Canada.

As regards the Australian Colonies, it may be well to explain that, with the near approach of federation, it is unlikely that the Conference which is to meet presently to consider the fusing of the postal services of Australia will be able to come to a decision about the penny post until close upon the end of the year. Judging, however, from telegrams which have been received from the Postmasters-General of the principal colonies there is reason to hope that the Commonwealth will fall in with New Zealand.

No doubt your Lordship will, before the receipt of this letter, be in a position to inform me whether Her Majesty's Government and the colonies which at present are parties to the Imperial penny-postage scheme are prepared to receive our letters at the penny rate. I am pleased to be able to say that highly satisfactory telegrams have been received from the Director-General of Posts, India, and the Postmasters-General, Hongkong, Natal, and Cape Colony.

I have, &c.,

J. G. WARD, Postmaster-General.

The Most Hon. the Marquess of Londonderry, K.G., P.C., Postmaster-General, London.

No. 34.

The Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington, to the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Washington.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 30th August, 1900.

I have the honour to confirm my telegram of the 18th instant, informing you that this colony would introduce universal penny postage from the 1st January next.

The scheme which it is proposed to introduce will, as far as practicable, be universal, as