

No. 30.

The HIGH COMMISSIONER, to the Right Hon. the PRIME MINISTER.

Westminster Chambers, 13 Victoria Street, London, S.W., 27th November, 1908.

SIR.— *Pacific Cable Board Rates for Press Messages.*

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th October last, and, in reply, to state that I have submitted the matter to which it refers for the consideration of the Pacific Cable Board.

I have, &c.,

WALTER KENNAWAY,
For the High Commissioner.

The Right Hon. the Prime Minister, Wellington.

[P.C. Press, 09/1.]

No. 31.

The ACTING-SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to the MANAGER, United Press Association, Wellington.

SIR,— General Post Office, Wellington, 2nd April, 1909.

In reference to the proposal for the reduction of cable rates between the United Kingdom and New Zealand, I shall be glad if you will inform me whether any guarantee could be given by your Association that any reduction in the Press rate would be followed by such an increase in the amount of Press messages *via* Pacific cable as would prevent a loss of revenue from the reduction.

I have, &c.,

W. R. MORRIS,
Acting Secretary.

The Manager, United Press Association (Limited), Wellington.

[P.C. Press, 09/5.]

No. 32.

The MANAGER, United Press Association, Wellington, to the ACTING-SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

SIR,— Wellington, 7th April, 1909.

In reply to your letter of 2nd April, asking whether the Association could give any guarantee that a reduction of Press rates on the Pacific Cable would be followed by an increase in messages equivalent to the amount of revenue remitted, I have to say that we . . . are quite unable to offer any guarantee.

I would further point out that a reduction on such a basis is no reduction at all. The Pacific Cable Company would be simply taking credit in the face of the world for a reduction in rates, while privately they would be insisting on receiving the same amount of money as before. It is rather absurd to suggest that such a proposal is a reduction in any sense at all. Once before the Association was placed in a similar position, and we simply wasted thousands of pounds in the effort to provide sufficient news to fill up the gap between the original rates and the reduced rates. In the light of our experience on that occasion, it is totally unlikely that we would have anything to do with such an offer again.

As to the probability of the Australian Cable Association utilizing the Pacific cable for, say, a portion of its messages, it will probably depend upon the cable authorities themselves. Not long after the line opened, after a great deal of trouble, I arranged that a quantity of Press cables were to come by that route. The Pacific cable offices threw so many obstacles in the way that Mr. McKinnon, the head of the Cable Association, threw up the project in disgust. After the way he was treated, I fancy it will be hard to get him to treat with the Pacific cable again.

* * * * *

I hope, however, more sensible counsels will prevail with those who now control the Pacific cable. If they are willing to listen to reason possibly an arrangement might yet be made with the Australian Cable Association to utilize the route to some degree.

I have, &c.,

W. H. ATACK, Manager.

The Acting-Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

[P.C. Press, 09/7.]

No. 33.

The Right Hon. the PRIME MINISTER to the HIGH COMMISSIONER.

SIR,— Prime Minister's Office, Wellington, 21st April, 1909.

In reference to your letter of the 28th January last, transmitting abstract of minutes of meeting of the Pacific Cable Board [not printed], and referring to the question of a Press guarantee as a preparative of a reduction in Press rates over the Pacific cable, I have the honour to forward herewith copy of a letter of the 7th instant from the Manager of the United Press Association (Limited). You will see that there is no hope of getting the Press Association to become responsible in the manner proposed; and there is no other body representing the Press in this Dominion to which Government could look for aid in the matter. The question of reduction, therefore, if further considered, must be considered apart from this point.

I have, &c.,

J. G. WARD,
Prime Minister.

The Hon. William Hall-Jones, High Commissioner for New Zealand, London.

[P.C. Press, 09/10.]