

Even before then the German Post Office was actuated by the desire to see the conditions for the entry of foreign countries into the Union regulated in a general manner, so as to facilitate the extension of the Union, and it accordingly entered into communication with the British Post Office in order, if it were possible, to establish beforehand an understanding on this important question between the two offices.

As the German Office obtained from the correspondence which took place the conviction that the British Office would not then consent to the above-mentioned proposal of the French Post Office, the German Office thought that an intermediate arrangement might be accepted at the Berne Conference, and accordingly, although it was on its side in a position to agree to the French proposal, it brought forward the motion that the payment for sea conveyance should be fixed for all countries beyond sea at—

25 francs per kilogramme for letters, and

1 franc per kilogramme for printed papers, &c.

These rates were in the first instance agreed to only for British India and the French Colonies.

The British Office declined the extension of the above rates to all countries, which was urged by the other delegates at the Conference, because it felt itself obliged, in the first instance, to come to an understanding on the subject with the more important British Colonies. In consequence of this, the applications of Spain and the Netherlands for the admission of their colonies, as well as the application of the Brazilian Government, were postponed. With a view to the settlement of the matter, and to a consideration of the German proposals, a Conference was to be held in London, the period for the assembling of which, according to the views of the British Office, was not to be earlier than the spring of 1877.

This period has now nearly arrived. Meanwhile the question has taken a favourable course, which was not then anticipated.

The British Office applied even in the course of the year 1876 for the admission of various British Colonies into the Union, under *the same conditions* as had been agreed upon for British India and the French Colonies.

The British Office at the same time declared its readiness to receive into the Union, under similar conditions, the Spanish and Netherlands Colonies, the Portuguese Colonies, and also Brazil, Japan, and the Argentine Republic.

As the other offices of the Union have likewise agreed to the admission into the Union of the said colonies and countries, a considerable extension of the limits of the Union will very shortly take place. The understanding in the case has been arrived at by means of a simple exchange of correspondence.

Thus, by this means has been attained in all essential particulars the objects for which the Conference in London was to be assembled; for it may naturally be assumed that the British Office, as well as all the other Union Offices, will concede also to the countries which do not yet belong to the Union the same conditions as to sea rates which have been agreed to in the cases of Brazil, Japan, and the Argentine Republic.

The effect would, however, be much more important if the sea rate of 25 francs per kilogramme for letters, and 1 franc per kilogramme for printed papers, &c., were expressly granted for *all* countries, because in such case the countries which still remained out of the Union would be in a position to see clearly the advantage of joining, and in consequence most of these countries would doubtless be led to seek admission to the Union. Nevertheless, I do not think it would be expedient now to summon a Conference in London for this object. A general discussion of this question might result in difficulties which have hitherto not been foreseen.

On the other hand, it must not be overlooked that in all probability the French Government will, at the Paris Congress in the spring of 1878, revert anew to its proposal, according to which for all fresh adherents to the Union only the stipulations of the Berne Treaty, including the rates of 6 francs 50 centimes per kilogramme for letters, and 50 centimes per kilogramme for printed papers, &c., shall be applied.

With reference to these considerations, and looking to the fact that it cannot possibly be to the interest of the trade and commerce of Great Britain that, while the whole of the Spanish, Netherlands, and Portuguese Colonies, as well as Brazil, Japan, and the Argentine Republic, are included in the Union, a part of the British Colonies in the West Indies, the whole of the British Possessions in Africa, and lastly the Australian Colonies, remain *outside* the Union, I do myself the honor to submit to the favourable consideration of the British Post Office whether it would not be desirable—

1. To bring about the entry of the whole of the British Colonies, especially those in Australia; and
2. To promote the admission of other foreign countries under the condition of the arrangement of the 27th January, 1876, in such a manner that before the meeting of the Paris Congress the question of the entry of foreign countries will be practically settled.

I should feel extremely obliged to the British Post Office for the favour of an early reply, stating its views on the subject.

STEPHAN.

Sub-Enclosure 2 to Enclosure 1 in No. 6.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, London, to the GERMAN IMPERIAL POSTMASTER-GENERAL.
SIR,—

General Post Office, London, 6th March, 1877.

The Postmaster-General has attentively considered your letter of the 18th ultimo, in which you strongly urge the desirability of steps being taken for the early admission into the General Postal Union, under the conditions of the arrangement concluded at Berne, on the 27th January, 1876, of all the British Colonies, and of such foreign countries as have not yet entered the Union.

In reply, I am directed to acquaint you that Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies has already communicated with the Government of every British Colony, and recommended that the question whether it should not apply for admission to become a member of the Union should receive full and immediate attention.