

but that action is for the present suspended, pending the decision of the older colonies, and requesting to be informed what action is intended to be taken by this Government in the matter.

In reply, I am to inform you that this Government is also inclined to enter the Union, if the terms are favourable; but it is agreed that, as a first step, the whole of the Australasian Colonies should give expression to their views. In the absence of any such information the Government has not thought it desirable to give a final reply to the Secretary of State's despatch of the 25th of May last.

At one time it was believed the matter might have been settled by a Conference, which was suggested by the New South Wales Post Office; but, although this department, since the receipt of your communication, requested to be informed whether it was still the intention to hold such a Conference, no reply has as yet been vouchsafed.

It is now thought undesirable to further delay replying to your letter, and at the same time to indicate the extent to which this department favours the Postal Union.

I have, &c.,
W. GRAY,
Secretary.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Brisbane.

No. 22.

Mr. GRAY to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Sydney.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 9th March, 1878.

QUESTION of colonies joining Postal Union again brought under notice of department. This colony has delayed forwarding definite reply, pending views of other colonies being ascertained. Is it still desired matter be considered by all the colonies as proposed by your office?

The Secretary, General Post Office, Sydney.

W. GRAY.

No. 23.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Sydney, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

Sydney, 30th April, 1878.

THE terms upon which colonies could enter Convention have been relaxed so much that the Postmaster-General is disposed to recommend that we join the Union. But as it is important that there should be uniformity of action on the part of such colonies as may propose to take this course, and as there is to be an Intercolonial Conference next month, he proposes that the provisions of the Berne Convention be considered at that Conference.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

SECRETARY,
General Post Office, Sydney.

No. 24.

MEMORANDUM by Mr. GRAY for the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

As to New Zealand joining Postal Union.

TERMS are now more favourable than those originally offered by Imperial Post Office.

It is not now proposed to disturb existing arrangements providing for the payment of postages on correspondence forwarded from the United Kingdom to the colonies. In the case of New Zealand these payments exceed £15,000 a year. Under the original proposals, these payments would have been considerably reduced.

British Colonies joining the Postal Union may now fix their letter rates as high as 6d. per half-ounce (the existing rate of postage between the colonies and the United Kingdom), in addition to a further postage of 2½d. per half-ounce on foreign letters, to cover cost of conveyance over sea by a foreign line of steamers. Land transit charges, instead of being covered by extra postage as at present, must be defrayed by the despatching offices. For instance, a letter addressed to Germany from New Zealand (supposing the colony joined the Union) would be liable for transit rates through Italy and Austria, which would have to be defrayed by this department. On the other hand, foreign correspondence for New Zealand from Union countries (if sent by way of San Francisco) would be accounted for to this department, at the rate of 2½d. per half-ounce on letters, and 5d. per lb. on newspapers, in return for New Zealand providing the sea conveyance from San Francisco. The bulk of foreign letters are sent by way of Galle, on which New Zealand pays Victoria an amount equivalent to the postages (on letters at 1s. 7d. per half-ounce). In the event of the colonies joining the Union, payments by non-contracting colonies should be reconsidered and revised.

Under the Union regulations, the charge for redirection is also abolished. All letters from Union countries for New Zealand (except wholly unpaid) would be delivered free, no matter how often the addressees changed their address. This is also intended to apply to correspondence posted locally for delivery within the colony; but the Postmaster-General has the right to decide that this regulation shall not apply to locally-posted correspondence. At present, redirected correspondence, irrespective of origin, is liable to a fresh rate of postage.

The advantages in joining the Union are—one uniform postal system for the exchange of correspondence with all parts of the world; the facilities afforded for the extension of the money-order system to all Union countries; that the colony would become more intimately connected with other countries now comparatively unknown, except by name; and that by frequent interchange of opinions between the Union offices, and discussing all matters bearing on postal laws and administration, the postal services would be materially improved in matters of detail as well as in general principles.