

The advantages to the public cannot be over-estimated. Exorbitant charges would be abolished, and a moderate and uniform rate of postage established. The public would no longer be in uncertainty as to the exact postage for any particular foreign country, and they would further know that all letters properly stamped would not be liable to any further charge on delivery; and the addressees would not be mulcted in heavy and vexatious charges as at present. The regulations of the Union have been made more in the interests of the public than the post offices. The extension of the money-order system, and a more intimate knowledge of other countries, cannot but result beneficially to the public.

That the colony, if agreeing to join the Union, would suffer a pecuniary loss is admitted. Defraying the cost of land transit charges (through Europe more particularly) would be the principal or one of the principal items of loss. The abolition of the redirection fees (if made to apply to locally-posted letters as well) would make a difference, to some extent, in our receipts. The registration fee, it is assumed, would have to be reduced, while the interchange of post cards would also contribute to make up a loss. It is not possible to state accurately what the actual loss would reach in the event of New Zealand entering the Union, but it has been estimated at £1,500 a year. If the redirection charge on locally-posted correspondence be not abolished, then the £1,500 would be in excess of the colony's probable loss.

Seeing the advantages to be derived by New Zealand entering the Union—both to the public as well as to the department—I submit the colony should be prepared to sustain a loss in consideration of becoming a "Union country" within the meaning of the Berlin Treaty. The more important countries and States have seen the wisdom of the regulations, and joined the Union. Several British colonies have followed this example, and the Australasian Group cannot well afford to hold aloof now that the terms for entering the Union may be regarded as fairly liberal.

I submit that one of the conditions on the colony joining the Union should be that the present arrangement with the Imperial Government, with respect to postage payments made the colonies, and the free carriage of mails from San Francisco to London (in the case of New South Wales and New Zealand)—in fact, that the arrangement made in 1873 should be maintained. This arrangement expires at the end of this year; but I submit that the colonies have every right to expect that the Imperial Government should renew the agreement, so long as the conveyance of mails between the colonies and Galle, Singapore, and San Francisco, respectively, is provided by the colonies at their own expense.

The decision of the colonies should be unanimous. Any favourable determination should be acquiesced in by all the colonies.

3rd July, 1878.

W. GRAY.

## No. 25.

### MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT by the Hon. the POSTMASTERS-GENERAL of NEW SOUTH WALES and NEW ZEALAND.

THAT the Colonies of New South Wales and New Zealand should, in view of the desirability of establishing uniform postal regulations of universal application, calculated to give the public the largest amount of accommodation possible, without useless and vexatious restrictions, join the Berne Postal Union: provided, however, that no reduction be made in the rate of postage for the ocean services, that the cost of the transit of the mails between San Francisco and New York or Boston be not charged to the colonies, and that the restrictions which have already or which may hereafter be imposed by local legislation in reference to wholly unpaid correspondence are not interfered with.

J. F. BURNS.

J. T. FISHER.

Wellington, 11th July, 1878.

By Authority: GEORGE DIDSBURY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1878.