

No. 28.

Mr. GRAY to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 12th October, 1878.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 15th August last, enclosing copy of a telegram received on that date by the Agent-General for Victoria from the Chief Secretary, Melbourne, asking him to communicate the result of the protest of the Agents-General against the proposed increase in the proportion of postages to be retained by the Imperial Government, together with a copy of the telegram which, after consultation with the other Agents-General, it was decided to send in reply thereto. This department had no previous knowledge of the telegrams in question.

I have, &c.,

Sir Julius Vogel, K.C.M.G.,

Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

W. GRAY,

(For the Postmaster-General.)

No. 29.

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

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 7th June, 1878.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 30th March, forwarding me a copy of correspondence with Mr. R. J. Creighton on the question of transit rates on mail matter across the American continent.

Since its receipt I have been in communication with Sir Daniel Cooper and Mr. Forster, Agent-General for New South Wales.

I have pleasure in forwarding you copies of documents which these gentlemen have furnished me.

I have, &c.

JULIUS VOGEL,

Agent-General.

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Wellington.

Enclosure 1 in No. 29.

Mr. THORNTON to Sir DANIEL COOPER.

MY DEAR SIR DANIEL,

British Legation, Washington, 28th October, 1876.

During my endeavours to come to an arrangement with the United States Post Office with regard to the transit of the mail, which was absolutely necessary, as the old arrangement had expired, I had more than one interview with Mr. Huntingdon, who manages the Central Pacific Railway, but could never ascertain from him what the weight of the mails really was. The Postmaster-General in his presence said it had been 33 cents per lb., and was now about 30 cents per lb. Mr. Huntingdon neither denied nor acquiesced except by silence. The Postmaster-General still insists that 30 cents is the cost of the transport.

A franc is equal to 193 cents, a kilogramme equal to 2·2055 lb.

Therefore, by the late arrangement for our mails, the charge for letters per lb. is 52·5 cents., and the charge for printed matter 17·5 cents per lb. The British mails transported between New York and San Francisco are about one-twelfth letters and eleven-twelfths printed matter, so that the average is about 20·4 cents per lb. It seems to me to be a very fair arrangement, and it was accepted by our Post Office without objection.

It is a bad time just now for doing business of any sort. The Postmaster-General is going to-morrow to Indiana on account of the elections, and the Superintendent of the Money Order Office is also absent and may return on Monday, but it is not certain. But it seems there is a great objection to increasing the number of Money Order Conventions, and, at any rate, it is a matter which would take several months to arrange.

With regard to a postal arrangement with Melbourne, this Post Office is prohibited from coming to any temporary arrangement except by postal convention. Some time ago the Melbourne Post Office made a proposal which this Post Office was prevented by law from accepting, but it answered it was prepared to agree upon a postal convention upon the same terms as those with New South Wales and New Zealand. The United States Postmaster-General is awaiting an answer to that communication.

As far as these matters are concerned I think it would be a matter of time to pay a visit to Washington. It is possible that if you do not come here I may see you at Philadelphia next week.

I have, &c.,

Sir Daniel Cooper.

EDWD. THORNTON.

Memoranda added by Sir D. Cooper.

[Newspaper extract.]

Washington, 6th October, 1876.

POSTMASTER-GENERAL TYNER and Sir Edward Thornton, acting on behalf of the Post Office Department of Great Britain and this country, signed an agreement to-day that the territorial transit charges to be paid by the British Post Office shall be 6 francs per kilogramme of letters (about 2 lb. 3 oz.), and 2 francs per kilogramme of printed matter and samples of merchandise. These new and increased rates apply to all mails conveyed across our territory on and after 24th August, 1876, and the agreement is terminable at one year's notice.