

1878.

NEW ZEALAND.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT.

(NINETEENTH ANNUAL REPORT.)

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

MY LORD,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 27th July, 1878.

I have the honor to submit to Your Excellency the Nineteenth Annual Report on the Postal Service of New Zealand.

I have, &c.,

J. T. FISHER,
Postmaster-General.

The Most Hon. the Marquis of Normanby, G.C.M.G.,
Governor of New Zealand.

REPORT.

THE determination on the part of the colony to enter the General Postal Union may be regarded as one of the more important events bearing on the future administration of the postal service of New Zealand.

The General Postal Union Scheme was first brought under the consideration of the department as far back as September, 1875; but, as the original conditions under which British Colonies would be permitted to join the Union were exceedingly unfavourable, this colony—indeed, the whole of the Australasian Colonies—decided to refrain from seeking admission into the General Postal Union. Terms of a more liberal nature having subsequently been submitted for consideration, it is now possible for any colony to enter the Union without suffering a serious pecuniary loss. At the Conference held in Melbourne in May last, respecting the duplication of the telegraph lines between Australasia and Europe, the General Postal Union scheme was also discussed, and the following resolution unanimously agreed to:—

“That the adoption of the amended treaty, agreed to by the Berne Postal Convention, be recommended for the favourable consideration of the Governments of Australia and New Zealand.”

The Hon. the Postmaster-General of New South Wales had occasion a few weeks since to pay an official visit to this colony, and, among other questions discussed, the terms of the Berne Treaty, and the amended proposals of the Imperial Government with respect to the Australasian Colonies entering the Union, were dealt with. The following memorandum was jointly agreed to on behalf of the two colonies:—

“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 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.”

In a report such as the present it would be impossible to discuss the advantages to be derived by any country entering the General Postal Union; and it has, therefore, been decided to submit to Parliament the whole of the papers in connection with the scheme.

Although the decision to join the General Postal Union will entail a small loss of revenue to the colony, it is held that, in view of the many and highly important advantages secured under the Union scheme, the colony should be prepared to incur the loss.

The inspection of Post Offices has been carried on vigorously, and with most encouraging results. The Inspector of Post Offices has travelled through the North and South Islands during the year, and the more important offices having been frequently inspected. The several reports speak favourably of the manner in which the Post Offices—or, at least, those in charge of officers of the permanent staff—are carried on. The general conduct of the officers has been most satisfactory. The absence of any serious complaint against the department is unmistakeable proof that the public interests are well cared for.