

Enclosure 4 in No. 9.

Mr. ALGERNON TURNOR to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

General Post Office, London, 8th October, 1880.

The Postmaster-General has had before him your letter of the 21st ultimo, in which, advertising to a communication from the Postmaster-General of New Zealand, requesting that the postage rates on correspondence despatched in the mails from this country to that colony by way of Brindisi may be raised to the old amounts, you ask what action this department has taken in the matter.

In reply I am directed to inform you that no action has been taken in the proposed direction for the following reasons: On the abolition of the Southampton route for the conveyance of mails between this country and Australia, in February last, a question arose as to the rates of postage which should be charged for the future. It was at first arranged that a rate of 7d. per half-ounce should be charged on letters, that being one penny less than the rate previously charged for letters sent in mails *viâ* Brindisi, and one penny more than that charged for letters *viâ* Southampton. This course, however, was objected to on the ground that three-fourths of the correspondence was sent *viâ* Southampton, and that persons long accustomed to pay 6d. for a letter would be unwilling to pay the higher rate proposed.

After much negotiation, the Agent-General of Victoria, the Right Hon. H. C. E. Childers, M.P., succeeded in obtaining from the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury the concession that the postage on correspondence for the Australian Colonies sent from the United Kingdom *viâ* Brindisi should be reduced to the old rates *viâ* Southampton—namely, for letters, 6d. per half-ounce; newspapers, 1d. each; books, &c., 1d. per ounce. These rates were already in force for the mail *viâ* San Francisco, so that the plan had the great advantage of establishing uniformity of postage to all the colonies and by all routes.

The Post Office of New Zealand now objected to this arrangement, and the Postmaster-General of that colony has addressed a letter to this department asking for the re-establishment, on correspondence to New Zealand *viâ* Brindisi, of the old Brindisi rates of 8d. per half-ounce for letters, 2d. each for newspapers, and 2d. per ounce for books, &c., the reason assigned being that for all letters, &c., sent by the Brindisi mail to New Zealand the cost to the colony is in excess of the proportion of postage which she receives.

I am to state that, while giving every consideration to the position of the colony in the matter, Mr. Fawcett feels that it would be exceedingly inconvenient to reverse the policy of low and uniform rates of postage which has been adopted, merely on the demand of one of the colonies concerned; but, apart from this, he apprehends that the existing rates having been fixed by the Treasury in concert with the Colonial Office, it is beyond the province of this department to move in the matter.

Under these circumstances I am to suggest that any communication you may desire to make on the subject should be addressed to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies.

I am to add, however, that instructions have been given that no correspondence for New Zealand is to be sent *viâ* Brindisi, unless specially addressed to go by that route.

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

I have, &c.,

ALGERNON TURNOR.

No. 10.

The Hon. ROBERT RAMSAY, Melbourne, to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY, Wellington.

SIR,—

Chief Secretary's Office, Melbourne, 30th July, 1880.

In transmitting the enclosed memorandum drawing attention to the fact that the Post Office Department of New Zealand still continues to charge the same rates of postage on correspondence, &c., *viâ* Brindisi as were in operation before the Southampton route was given up, thereby imposing a penalty on correspondence forwarded for transmission under the Victorian contract with the Peninsular and Oriental Company, contrary to the spirit of the agreement made to obviate any objection which might be taken by the other Colonies, I feel certain that it is only necessary to ask that the subject may receive your earliest attention in order to secure the postal rates by various routes being assimilated.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New Zealand.

ROBERT RAMSAY.

Enclosure in No. 10.

MEMORANDUM for the Hon. the CHIEF SECRETARY.

WITH reference to the circular despatch, dated 16th March last, from the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies to His Excellency the Governor, respecting the reduction of postage on letters, packets, and newspapers transmitted *viâ* Brindisi, and the arrangement agreed to by the Imperial Government at the instance of the Right Hon. H. C. E. Childers on behalf of this colony, for division of the postage collected, the Postmaster-General begs to draw attention to the fact that the Post Office Department of New Zealand continues to collect, on correspondence forwarded *viâ* Brindisi, the rates of postage charged prior to the abandonment of the Southampton route, viz., letters, 8d; newspapers, 2d.; packets, 2d. per ounce.

Under the new arrangement, the postal rates *viâ* Brindisi collected in the United Kingdom on correspondence addressed to all the Australian Colonies, and in Victoria on homeward mail matter, are the same as charged *viâ* San Francisco. On outward correspondence the Home Government accounts to Victoria for 2½d. per half-ounce letter, retaining 3½d. per letter and the whole of the postage on outward packets and newspapers. On homeward correspondence Victoria retains the whole of the letter-postage, and accounts for half on packets and newspapers. The Imperial Post Office defrays the cost of transit through Italy and France, both ways.