

No. 4.

The Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL to the SECRETARY, Canterbury Chamber of Commerce.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 6th November, 1897.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th ultimo, conveying a resolution of your Chamber that, in its opinion, the time had arrived for cheaper cable-communication with Europe, and that the Government be urged to make arrangements for a reduction in the rates.

In reply, I would point out that, when the distance between New Zealand and Europe is considered, the present rates are probably the cheapest in the world. Your Chamber will no doubt recollect that the reduction in the rates in 1893 from 10s. 6d. to 5s. 2d. per word for Europe, and from 9s. 6d. to 3s. for the first ten words, and 1s. to 5d. for each additional word to Sydney, was only secured on a heavy guarantee being entered into by the associated colonies, on which, up to April last, New Zealand has paid £18,349. Although, mainly on account of the greater attention given to mining affairs in Western Australia and New Zealand, the telegraph traffic has increased so materially as to relieve the colony from further payments in connection with the international (European) guarantees, there is still a considerable loss on the intercolonial business, which necessitates an annual payment of between £2,500 and £3,000 per annum.

A further reduction in the rates would, under the circumstances, appear to be somewhat premature, more especially as the general taxpayer has already contributed so largely to the establishment of a tariff which is mainly to the advantage of the business community. It is regretted, therefore, that Government is not at present prepared to move in the direction desired by your Chamber.

I have, &c.,

W. C. WALKER,

For the Postmaster-General.

The Secretary, Canterbury Chamber of Commerce, Christchurch.

PROPOSED PACIFIC CABLE.

No. 5.

The Hon. the PREMIER, Wellington, to the Hon. the PREMIER, Ottawa.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 3rd November, 1897.

OBLIGED if you will inform me position Pacific cable and intentions your Government.

No. 6.

The Hon. the PREMIER, Wellington, to the Hon. the PREMIER, Sydney.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 3rd November, 1897.

WHAT is position Pacific cable, and are you doing anything in the matter? I have cabled our Agent-General [telegram not printed] that I did not propose that this colony should be represented at conference suggested by Colonial Office to consider Eastern Telegraph Company's proposals *re* cable to South Africa. I have also wired Premier, Queensland.

No. 7.

The Hon. the PREMIER, Brisbane, to the Hon. the PREMIER, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

Brisbane, 4th November, 1897.

HAVE no information as to present position Pacific-cable question. Do not propose taking any action.

No. 8.

The Hon. the PREMIER, Sydney, to the Hon. the PREMIER, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

Sydney, 5th November, 1897.

AM in receipt of your telegram of third *re* Pacific cable.

No. 9.

The Hon. the PREMIER, Ottawa, to the Hon. the PREMIER, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

Ottawa, 8th November, 1897.

MATTER of Pacific cable in abeyance; no prospect of immediate action by this Government.

No. 10.

The Hon. the PREMIER, Sydney, to the Hon. the PREMIER, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

Sydney, 15th November, 1897.

YOUR telegram of third instant: I do not see what can be done *re* Pacific cable until Canada makes up her mind.