

In reply, I have to inform you as follows :—

It is quite true that in virtue of the article mentioned by you a restricted union may be established with a view to reducing postal charges between contracting parties, but, in my opinion, it is hardly in the spirit of the said article that such restricted unions should be established with that object between contracting parties who are so distant from each other as Sweden and the British colonies of Australasia, more especially as between such contracting parties there does not exist any direct postal exchange, while normal charges of the Universal Postal Union are maintained in exchanges between Sweden and contracting parties so near as Germany, for example, with which Sweden maintains the most frequent relations. And even if there were no obstacles to the realisation of such a proposal from this point of view, if presented by the whole of the British colonies of Australasia its adoption would in any case have for Sweden such incalculable consequences, as well for the internal service as in the relations with many foreign countries, that for my part I would be unable to recommend it for the acceptance of my Government.

With reference to the above-mentioned matter I am therefore under the necessity of declining your well-intentioned proposals, and, viewing the question as I do, I am not even able to cause to be delivered to addressees, without surcharge, letters coming here from your colony and prepaid at the rate of 1d. per half-ounce.

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No. 129.

The Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington, to the DEPUTY POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Melbourne.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 1st April, 1901.

I HEARTILY congratulate you on adopting penny postage within your State. Trust that your example speedily followed by the other States, and the penny rate made universal throughout the Commonwealth, and applied to this colony as well. May I venture to hope that, as you now have an inland penny post, our letters prepaid 1d. will be accepted and delivered without surcharge?

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No. 130.

The Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington, to the Hon. the MINISTER OF COMMERCE, Vienna.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 9th April, 1901.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25th January last, advising that your office could not agree either to the proposed exchange of letters between our respective countries at the rate of 1d. per half-ounce or to the receipt without surcharge of such letters from New Zealand.

I much regret to learn your decision in this matter, more especially as the administrations of Chili, Costa Rica, Egypt, Italy, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal and Portuguese colonies, Siam, and Switzerland have readily agreed to consider our penny letters as fully prepaid. In view of the fact that the countries mentioned have seen no difficulty in agreeing to the proposal for penny postage in one direction, I should be obliged if you would again give the question your consideration, in the hope that you may yet be able to see your way to at least deliver penny letters from New Zealand without surtax.

I have, &c.,

J. G. WARD, Postmaster-General.

The Hon. the Minister of Commerce, Vienna.

[Letters in similar terms sent to the Hon. the Imperial Minister for War (in respect of Bosnia and Herzegovina) (9/4/01); the Director-General of Finances, Luxembourg (9/4/01); the Directors-General of Posts, Budapest (9/4/01), Madrid (9/4/01), Hague (9/4/01), Brussels (9/4/01), Bucharest (9/4/01), Sofia (9/4/01), Rio de Janeiro (9/4/01), Athens (9/4/01), Tunis (9/4/01), San Domingo (9/4/01), Copenhagen (2/5/01), Christiania (2/5/01), St. Petersburg (17/5/01), Stockholm (22/5/01), and Constantinople (22/5/01); and the Secretary-General, Department of Foreign Affairs, Congo Free State (11/6/01).]

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No. 131.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL, Congo Free State, Department of Foreign Affairs, Brussels, to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington.

État Independant du Congo, Departement des Affaires Etrangères,

MONSIEUR LE MAÎTRE-GENERAL DES POSTES,—

Bruxelles, le 17 Avril, 1901.

J'ai l'honneur de vous accuser la reception de votre lettre du 23 Novembre dernier par laquelle vous avez bien voulu me proposer l'établissement d'une union restreinte entre la Nouvelle-Zelande et l'État Independant du Congo sur les bases de l'Article XXI. de la Convention principale de Washington.

L'Administration postale de l'État n'a jusqu'ici conclu d'accord de l'espèce avec aucune administration de l'Union, c'est dire que le tarif d'affranchissement en vigueur dans notre service est applique uniformement à tous les offices avec lesquels nous entretenons des échanges.

Je ne pense donc pas que la modification qui y serait apportée se justifierait pour les relations postales d'un seul pays.

6—F. 3.