

Enclosure in No. 140.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, London, to the UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE, Colonial Office
SIR,—

General Post Office, London, 20th August, 1913.

With reference to your letter of the 8th ultimo [not printed] enclosing a copy of a letter from the High Commissioner for New Zealand asking for information as to the system of "ocean letters" introduced by the Marconi International Marine Communication Company (Limited), I am directed by the Postmaster-General to state, for the information of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, that the Postmaster-General authorized the company in January last to introduce the ocean-letter system under the following conditions:—

- (1.) That the messages should not be transmitted when either of the ships concerned was within range of a coast station:
- (2.) That they should only be exchanged between ships proceeding in opposite directions:
- (3.) That only one ship-to-ship transmission should be allowed:
- (4.) That radio-telegrams accepted under the provisions of the International Convention should not be delayed.

The rates which the company were authorized to charge for ocean letters were 5s. 6d. for the first thirty words, including postage and registration fee, and 1d. for each word over thirty up to a maximum of 100 words.

A similar arrangement was already in operation on certain German ships when the Marconi Company applied to the Postmaster-General for his authority to introduce the system; and the Postmaster-General would have no objection to its adoption on British ships whose wireless installations are controlled by other companies.

As the Secretary of State is aware, provision is made in the regulations of the new Radio-telegraph Convention, which have just come into force, for the exchange between ships of radio-telegrams to be posted at a port of call of the receiving ship; and, in the absence of any special arrangement such as that referred to above, the ship charges for radio-telegrams exchanged under the new regulations will in practically every case be 8d. a word (4d. a word for each of the two ships), a rate of charge which, with the addition of the charge for postage (2½d.), will be higher for every message containing more than seven words than under the ocean-letter system introduced by the Marconi Company.

I have, &c.,

E. CRABB,

The Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office.

For the Secretary.

No. 141.

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

(Memorandum.)

Postmaster-General's Office, Wellington, 8th September, 1913.

PROVISION is made for telephonic communication between Wellington and Christchurch when the telegraph-offices are closed. If required in the case of an urgent call, the Harbourmaster at Lyttelton can be communicated with by telephone from Christchurch at any time of the day or night.

The Hon. the Minister of Marine, Wellington.

R. HEATON RHODES.

No. 142.

The SECRETARY, Lyttelton Harbour Board, Christchurch, to the Hon. the MINISTER OF MARINE, Wellington.

SIR,—

Lyttelton Harbour Board, Christchurch, 2nd October, 1913.

I am instructed to acknowledge receipt of yours of the 12th ultimo [not printed] in reference to the question of wireless communication with Lyttelton, which came before the Board at its meeting on the 1st instant, and to thank you for the information conveyed therein.

I was, however, further instructed to say that, while recognizing from your statement that it is possible to communicate wireless messages for Lyttelton, received at Wellington, to the port for which they are intended, there is no indication that such messages will as a matter of course be so communicated immediately on their receipt. Indeed, it appears from the late case of the mishap of the "Maori" that it may depend on the judgment of the officer in charge of the wireless station, or the telegraph-office, or the telephone-office, as the case may be, whether such wireless messages shall be passed on immediately or kept until the telegraph-office opens next morning.

In the case of the "Maori" before referred to, the master of that vessel considered the information of sufficient importance to communicate to the "Niwaru," and the master of that vessel also considered it of sufficient importance to pass it on, while some officer in Wellington appears to have decided that it was not of sufficient importance to pass it on to Lyttelton, although it now appears that this could have been done.

The Board expressed the hope that such instructions would be issued that all wireless messages for Lyttelton would be passed on to that port immediately.

I have, &c.,

CYRUS J. C. WILLIAMS,

The Hon. the Minister of Marine, Marine Department, Wellington.

Secretary.