

SESS. II.—1879.
NEW ZEALAND.

NEWS MESSAGES FROM NEW ZEALAND TO ENGLAND.

(CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING A PROPOSAL MADE BY REUTER'S TELEGRAM COMPANY,
MELBOURNE.)

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

No. 1.

MR. H. M. COLLINS to the Hon. Sir G. GREY.

Reuter's Telegram Company (Limited),

SIR,— Central Office for Australasia, Melbourne, 20th May, 1879.

Mr. Ernest E. Collins, who has recently returned from New Zealand, has duly reported to me the substance of the conversation he had the honor to have with you when at Wellington on the subject of telegrams of New Zealand news for publication in the English and European Press; and, understanding that it is your wish to receive from me further details of the proposal which has been informally submitted to you, I now take the liberty of addressing you further thereon.

You are doubtless aware that this Company is in the habit of supplying to the English Press telegrams of political, financial, and general intelligence from all parts of the world. Experience has proved, however, that the expenses of transmission from the Australian Colonies are so great as practically to prohibit the Company from doing that justice to colonial events which the growing importance of the colonies demands; the Home Press, on the other hand, are not disposed to contribute specially to such a service: and without the assistance of the various Governments it is impossible for my Company to do more than chronicle the most startling events, and then only in the briefest possible form. The principle of a direct contribution has been already recognized by the Governments of Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, and Queensland, from each of which colonies telegrams are now frequently sent containing all items of interest to the public at Home. In this manner the proceedings of the various Parliaments, financial and other official statements, and many other matters, are transmitted to London, and are published by every newspaper throughout the United Kingdom, whereas formerly they appeared in an obscure paragraph in one or two newspapers only, or in the form of a letter to the editor of the *Times*.

It is because of the great publicity given to Reuter's telegrams that I now venture to address you on the subject of telegraphic messages from New Zealand. Seeking as it does rather the perfection of its news services than any great pecuniary advantage, this Company would be prepared to telegraph at the actual cost price, *plus* a small fixed charge for the address and for insuring due publication throughout the English Press, all telegrams sent with the knowledge and approval of the New Zealand Government. The only condition which it would take the liberty of making is that facts alone should be transmitted through it, and that all expressions of opinion on political questions should be carefully avoided.

By the use of the Company's extensive telegraphic code secrecy, accuracy, and a considerable saving of expense might frequently be insured, and the Company would be willing that Government should share to the extent of 50 per cent. in any economy so effected by the use of the code.

With regard to the selection of items, this could either be made by an officer of Government or by Mr. S. Carroll, the agent of this Company at Wellington, who could submit for approval such news as he might deem of sufficient interest for despatch to London. The Company would naturally prefer that all news should, previous to despatch, receive the approval of Government, by whose wishes it would naturally desire to be guided in every way.

As regards the cost of the service, this would necessarily remain entirely within the control of Government. Weeks might frequently pass without the necessity arising for the despatch of a message at all; whilst at other times, during the sittings of Parliament or on the presentation of the annual Budget, lengthy messages might advantageously be sent. In any case the outlay would not, I believe, exceed £300 to £500 per annum.

I have now stated such particulars as seem to me requisite to enable Government rightly to understand the character of the service which this Company is prepared to undertake; but should further details be required I shall be most happy to furnish them without delay.

Trusting that my proposal may receive favourable consideration at your hands, and soliciting the favour of a reply,

I have, &c.,

HENRY M. COLLINS,

General Agent for Australasia.

Hon. Sir George Grey, K.C.B.,
Premier of the Government of New Zealand.

No. 2.

The Hon. J. HALL to Mr. H. M. COLLINS.

SIR,—

Government Offices, Wellington, 15th October, 1879.

The Government have carefully considered the letter, dated 20th May, which you, on behalf of Reuter's Telegram Company (Limited), addressed to the Hon. Sir George Grey as Premier.

2. In that letter you state the views of your Company as to the advantages that would be gained for the colony if the Government would agree to pay yearly a sum representing a little more than the actual cost of transmitting by telegraph to London such items of news as might from time to time be prepared by the Government, or approved of by them, that news being, through the agency of your Company, supplied to the newspapers of the United Kingdom.

3. The Government recognize the very great value of the services performed by your Company in aiding British and colonial papers to publish news from all parts of the world, and they therefore regret that they are compelled to differ from you respecting the proposal now in question.

4. It is the opinion of my colleagues and myself that the Government of New Zealand ought not to contribute, out of the funds of the colony, towards securing the publication anywhere of political or other news relating to the colony, especially when, in theory if not in fact, they would themselves control the compilation of that news.

5. The Government must consequently decline to make any such arrangement as you have submitted to them, but they will cause a copy of this correspondence to be laid before the General Assembly, which is now in session.

Henry M. Collins, Esq.,

General Agent for Australasia, &c., &c.

I have, &c.,

JOHN HALL.

By Authority: GEORGE DIDSBURY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1879.