

of Queensland, to the rate for a single letter being reduced to 6d., and a newspaper to 1d., and to the apportionment of the rates collected in England and the colony being carried out as set forth in the letter of the Right Hon. the Postmaster-General to the Treasury, dated the 16th instant.

The Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies,
Downing Street.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS McILWRAITH.

No. 22.

The Hon. Mr. DICK to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 22nd May, 1880.

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letters, of 12th February and 18th March respectively, relative to the rates of postage proposed to be charged on correspondence forwarded by the Brindisi route, and to thank you for the copies of the correspondence you were good enough to enclose.

The objections entertained by this Government to the Victorian proposal, conveyed in my telegram to you of the 26th January, were based on the increase which it would make to the loss already sustained by New Zealand on correspondence sent *via* Brindisi. The loss is represented by the difference between the transit postage and the sum paid for the transmission of the mails between Brindisi and Calais, an amount estimated to be on letters equal to 1d. per ounce. In addition to this loss, the sum paid for the carriage of the Brindisi mails between Melbourne and the colony must also be taken into account. The very recent proposal of the Victorian Government diminishes this objection, but does not remove it. It is obvious, however, that the effect of reducing the Brindisi postage to 6d. per half-ounce would be to increase the number of letters sent by that route and in like proportion the colony's loss on correspondence sent by way of Brindisi, while at the same time the revenue earned by the San Francisco service would be seriously diminished.

I have, &c.,

Sir Julius Vogel, K.C.M.G.,
Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

THOMAS DICK,
(for the Postmaster-General).

No. 23.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES to His Excellency the GOVERNOR.

SIR,—

Downing Street, 16th March, 1880.

With reference to my telegram of the 25th of August last, and to the despatch which followed it in the same month, relating to the abandonment of the Southampton mail route, I have the honor to inform you that I have taken care to bring the views of your Government and of the other colonies concerned under the consideration of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury.

In consequence of the reduction of the transit rates agreed upon by the French and Italian Post Offices (which rendered a reduced Brindisi rate possible) being made dependent upon the transmission of all the correspondence by way of Brindisi, Her Majesty's Government were unable to change the arrangements which I communicated to you, so as to restore the Southampton route, as was urged by several of the Colonial Governments.

Her Majesty's Government have, however, since received a proposal made by the Right Hon. H. C. E. Childers on behalf of the Government of Victoria, the acceptance of which has been urged by the Agent-General for South Australia as the representative of that colony, for establishing the same rates for letters, newspapers, and book-packets transmitted *via* Brindisi, Adelaide, and Melbourne as those already charged *via* San Francisco, which also correspond with the old Southampton rates.

I proceed briefly to notice the points of difference between this proposal and the arrangement which came into force on the 1st February:—

By this latter arrangement, as your Government is aware, the rates were fixed at— letters, 7d. per half-ounce; newspapers (not exceeding four ounces), 1½d.; book-packets and patterns, 1½d. per two ounces. Of the postage charged on the outward letter, it had been arranged that the Imperial Treasury should retain 2d., the shares of postage on the double letter (*i.e.*, a letter each way) being divided in the proportion of 2d. to the Imperial Treasury, and of 10d. to the colonies; the mother-country and the colonies each retaining 1d. towards payment of foreign transit rate on letters which they respectively despatch.

The present proposal fixes the rates for letters at 6d. per half-ounce; for newspapers (not exceeding four ounces), 1d.; book-packets and patterns, 1d. per ounce; and provides that the Imperial Treasury, in consideration of its defraying the transit rates in both directions, shall retain 3½d. on the outward letter, the colonies receiving 2½d. on the outward, and 6d. on the homeward letter. On newspapers and book-packets the Imperial Treasury is to retain the whole of the outward postage, and to be credited with one-half of the homeward rate, defraying therefrom all the overland charges of the French and Italian Governments.

In order to obviate any objection which might be taken to this proposal by other colo-