

The Commissioner, having carefully considered the subject of your letter, desires me to reply seriatim to the several proposals contained in it.

Nos. 1 and 2.—With reference to your application for a new lease of a special wire for a period of three years from May next, it appears to the Government open to grave doubt whether, under the Electric Telegraph Act, legal authority exists by which any lease for a special wire can be granted.

The Government, therefore, are not at present able to entertain your proposition for a further lease, but they will propose legislation on the subject during next session of Parliament.

Under these circumstances, it would be undesirable to enter at the present time upon the question of any important modification of existing arrangements, which you propose should be introduced into the new lease. There are, however, some minor alterations proposed by you which appear calculated to facilitate the work of the Association, and which have been carefully considered with a view of meeting your wishes as far as possible.

No. 3.—“That all messages unfinished at closing time be finished to all papers requiring them” either on time or at Press rates.”

This proposal can be complied with so far as to allow messages put in before midnight, and not finished before 1 a.m., to be completed at Press rates, if marked by the senders to be so completed.

No. 4.—“That the special wire be not taken under any circumstances for ordinary Press purposes.”

A fair arrangement on this point appears to be, that, if owing to interruptions on the wires only one is left working, the special-wire messages and the ordinary Press messages should be sent upon it alternately, after ordinary work is clear, each taking two hundred words at a time.

No. 6.—“All messages to be timed.”

There is no objection to messages being timed, if this is done by the senders upon the messages being delivered.

No. 7.—“No charge to be made for extra copies.”

The Commissioner would not object to two copies being furnished when required. If a larger number be called for, they would have to be paid for at present rates.

No. 8.—“Messages for morning papers put in at 5 o'clock stations between the hours of 4 and 5 p.m. to be transmitted that night at evening rates.”

The concession here asked for would, it is feared, lead to serious inconvenience, but the department would be enabled to meet the Association so far as to provide specially for the opening of the office at Russell, when the Sydney steamers call there. The office at Hamilton to be kept open, and Hawera, and other places on the West Coast where this arrangement may be found desirable, during the presence of a large military force in that locality. Any message required to be sent after 5 o'clock should be put in by 4.30, and be limited to five hundred words. I would be glad if you would furnish me with the names of those stations closing at 5 p.m. at which you desire messages taken in for transmission after 5 p.m. prior to the hour of closing.

No. 9.—“The principal stations formerly opened until 10 o'clock p.m. to be again opened to that hour for Press purposes.”

Of the stations here referred to, provision has already been made for those at Ashburton and Nelson. With regard to Grahamstown, further inquiry is necessary before a definite reply can be given to your proposal.

The other points raised in your letter must, for the reasons already given, stand over until fresh legislation has been obtained.

I shall feel obliged if you will inform me whether the above proposition will meet the views of the Association, in which case no time will be lost in taking the necessary steps for having them embodied in a supplementary agreement.

I have, &c.,

A. T. MAGINNITY,
Secretary.

No. 3.

The MANAGER, United Press Association, to the SECRETARY for TELEGRAPHS.

SIR,—

Wellington, 11th March, 1880.

I have the honor to draw your attention to the fact that the Sydney steamers now almost always make Russell their first port of arrival in this colony, and as that station closes at 5 o'clock the Press is put at a serious disadvantage in respect to obtaining Australian news. I would therefore ask that, when the steamer arrives there at too late an hour for the news to be got through to evening papers, the officer in charge there might be instructed to receive our summaries between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m., so that they could be transmitted to Auckland at evening rates. There they would come on the special wire.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, New Zealand Telegraphs.

E. T. GILLON.

No. 4.

The SECRETARY for TELEGRAPHS to the MANAGER, United Press Association.

SIR,—

New Zealand Telegraphs, Head Office, Wellington, 6th April, 1880.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 30th ultimo, requesting that the office at Russell be kept open to transmit mail summaries on the arrival of Sydney steamers, and, in reply, beg to inform you that instructions have been issued accordingly.

I have, &c.,

The Manager, United Press Association.

A. T. MAGINNITY.