

1880.

NEW ZEALAND.

LEASE OF SPECIAL WIRE

(CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO).

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

No. 1.

Mr. A. G. HORTON to the Hon. the COMMISSIONER of TELEGRAPHS.

SIR,—

United Press Association, Wellington, 27th February, 1880.

In reference to our conversation yesterday, I have now the honor to submit, on behalf of the directors of the United Press Association, the following memorandum respecting a fresh lease of a special wire between Auckland and the Bluff, with such changes and modifications as have, in the course of the past fourteen months, been found to be absolutely necessary to the successful working of the system for Press purposes.

I also beg to ask for one or two other modifications on behalf of the Association in matters of detail, where the regulations are found to press unfairly or heavily upon the Press of the colony.

Special Wire.

The following is the basis upon which the Association will be prepared to lease:—

1. That a new lease be granted for a special wire between Auckland and the Bluff for a period of three years from the 1st May next.
2. That the hours for the use of such special wire be from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays when Parliament is not in session, and from 7 p.m. to 2 a.m. on the same days when Parliament is in session. That on Saturdays, when Parliament is not in session, the hours be from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.; and when Parliament is in session, from 7 to 12 p.m. That on Sundays the hours be from 5.30 p.m. to 7.30, except when the San Francisco mail arrives after 10 p.m. on Saturday or on Sunday, when the wire shall be open to 10 p.m. on Sunday.
3. That all messages unfinished at closing time be finished to all papers requiring them either on time or at Press rates.
4. That the special wire be not taken under any circumstances for ordinary Press purposes.
5. That a substantial rebate be allowed when the special wire is interrupted.
6. All messages to be timed.
7. No charge to be made for extra copies.

General.

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 principal stations, formerly opened until 10 o'clock p.m., to be again opened to that hour for Press purposes.

The head office of the Association in Wellington to be allowed to receive 2,000 words during the day at evening rates, the Wellington papers being reduced to 500 words each.

The Hon. John Hall, Commissioner of Telegraphs.

I have, &c.,

A. G. HORTON.

No. 2.

The SECRETARY for TELEGRAPHS to Mr. A. G. HORTON.

SIR,—

New Zealand Telegraph Department, 16th March, 1880.

I have the honor, by direction of the Commissioner of Telegraphs, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th February ultimo, embodying a proposal on behalf of the United Press Association for a fresh lease of a special wire between Auckland and the Bluff, with certain modifications of existing arrangements.

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.

No. 5.

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

SIR,—

Wellington, 3rd May, 1880.

I have just learned that, in a letter addressed to Mr. Horton on the 16th March, the Hon. the Commissioner stated that he would allow special-wire 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.

On inquiry from Mr. Robertson, I learn that he has not as yet received any instructions to this effect.

May I ask whether the new rule is now in force. If so, I would probably be glad to take advantage of it to-night to some slight extent, as the "Rotomahana" is at the Bluff and the Frisco mail will probably arrive during the evening. As I have failed to see you personally, I should esteem a reply in time to instruct agents as a favour.

The Secretary, New Zealand Telegraphs.

I have, &c.,

E. T. GILLON.

No. 6.

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

SIR,—

Wellington, 7th May, 1880.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 3rd instant with reference to completing messages presented before midnight and not finished before 1 a.m., and in reply beg to inform you that I have forwarded you a copy of the letter sent to Mr. Horton, but have not yet received from Mr. Horton any acknowledgment of that letter or acceptance of the conditions therein detailed.

I have, &c.,

A. T. MAGINNITY.

The Manager, United Press Association.

No. 7.

The CHAIRMAN of COMMITTEE, United Press Association, to the Hon. the COMMISSIONER of TELEGRAPHS.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 13th May, 1880.

I have to apologize for not having yet replied to your letter of the 15th March, addressed to Mr Horton, and since forwarded to me, wherein you reply to the request for a fresh lease of a special wire (under modified conditions) to this Association.

I note with satisfaction that, though the Government has grave doubts whether legal authority at present exists to grant such a lease, it will propose legislation on the subject at the coming session of Parliament.

I regret that, owing to the Committee not having met since the date of your letter, I am unable to inform you in detail whether the various propositions contained in that letter meet the views of the Association, but hope to be in a position at an early date to give a definite reply.

In the meantime I shall feel obliged if you will, in accordance with your promise, direct that "Messages put in before midnight and not finished before 1 a.m. may be completed at Press rates if marked by the senders to be so completed."

I have, &c.,

WM. REEVES.

The Hon. the Commissioner of Telegraphs.

No. 8.

The SECRETARY for TELEGRAPHS, to the CHAIRMAN of COMMITTEE, United Press Association.

SIR,—

Wellington, 31st May, 1880.

I am directed by the Hon. the Telegraph Commissioner to enclose to you the copy of a memorandum addressed to him upon the subject of the concession made to the United Press Association in my letter of the 15th March, whereby special-wire matter presented before midnight and remaining untransmitted at the hour of closing might be completed at Press rates if specially marked.

The Commissioner presumes that the concession above named will not be required on the evenings of Saturday and Sunday, but, to avoid any misunderstanding, has, before giving any positive instructions on the point, directed me to forward to you a copy of the memorandum. Awaiting your reply,

I have, &c.,

A. T. MAGINNITY.

The Chairman of Committee, United Press Association.

Enclosure in No. 8.

MEMORANDUM.

The Hon. the Commissioner.

REFERRING to the concession granted to the Press Association, enabling them to clear all special-wire work put in before midnight and remaining untransmitted at hour of closing special wire, at Press rates, I beg to recommend that such concession should not apply to the evenings of Saturday and Sunday, excepting in very special cases, such as the arrival of the English mail at Auckland or the Bluff.

I think this consideration is due to the officers of the department, as their hours of duty during the remaining days of the week are both long and arduous.

It was not contemplated by the department that the concession should apply to Saturdays and Sundays; and, to save misunderstanding hereafter, I would recommend that the Association be advised that the evenings of Saturday and Sunday are exceptions to the arrangement.

28th May, 1880.

A. T. MAGINNITY.

No. 9.

The CHAIRMAN of COMMITTEE, United Press Association, to the Hon. the COMMISSIONER of TELEGRAPHS.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 4th June, 1880.

In reply to your letter of the 1st instant, covering a memorandum from Mr. Maginnity *re* the concession made to the United Press Association for forwarding matter after midnight, in which he recommends that the Association be advised that the evenings of Saturday and Sunday shall be excepted from the arrangement, I have to state that the Association will not object, provided that this rule is not applied in very special cases, such as the arrival of the English mail at Auckland or the Bluff.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM REEVES.

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