

No. 21.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES to His Excellency the ADMINISTRATOR.
(Circular.)

SIR,—

Downing Street, 4th December, 1882.

A question has arisen in one of the Colonies as to the proper method of valuing imports and exports for statistical purposes. Reply,
A.-1, No. 33.

The matter is one of much interest and importance, and I am desirous of collecting information on the subject from all parts of the Empire. I shall therefore be glad to learn what the practice is in the Colony under your Government—(1.) As regards the amount taken to be the value of the imports and exports: whether, for instance, the value of imports at the port of shipment, without extra charge, is taken; or whether freight and shipping charges are added, or some other addition made or other mode of valuation followed, with the view of taking the value of the goods as they lie in the port of entry; and whether allowance is made for the rate of exchange between the port of entry and the port of shipment. (2.) As regards the means of ascertaining the value: whether it is calculated by Government officials, and, if so, upon what basis; or whether the declaration of the master of the ship, or merchant, is taken, and, if so, what, if any, means are used to insure the correctness of such declaration.

I shall be happy to receive any further information on the subject that you may be able to obtain, or any observations or suggestions that may occur to you or to the officers of your Government.

I have, &c.,

The Officer Administering the Government
of New Zealand.

KIMBERLEY.

No. 22.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES to His Excellency the ADMINISTRATOR.
(Circular.)

SIR,—

Downing Street, 13th December, 1882.

I have the honour to transmit to you, for your information and guidance, and for communication to your Ministers, a copy of a letter from the Postmaster-General, drawing attention to certain proposed alterations in the rates for sea-service fixed by the Postal Union, and to the conditions upon which, if at all, the South African and Australian Colonies might offer to join the Union. Reply,
A.-1, No. 31.

I have, &c.,

The Officer Administering the Government
of New Zealand.

KIMBERLEY.

Enclosure.

The POST OFFICE to the COLONIAL OFFICE.

SIR,—

General Post Office, London, 6th November, 1882.

The Postmaster-General understands that there is every probability of the South African Colonies of the Cape and Natal applying for admission next year to the Postal Union, and that the calculations upon which the new contracts between those Colonies and the two companies conveying the mails between this country and South Africa have been framed, are based upon the tariffs of the Convention of Paris, at present regulating the affairs of the Union.

In these circumstances, Mr. Fawcett thinks it his duty to bring to the knowledge of the Earl of Kimberley an important proposal, which the German Post Office has announced its intention of making at the next Postal Union Congress, to take place at Lisbon in the spring of 1884. This proposal is to reduce the rates payable by one country to another for the conveyance of mails over distances of more than 300 miles by sea from 15 francs a kilogramme for letters and post-cards and 1 franc a kilogramme for other articles, to 5 francs a kilogramme for letters and post-cards and 50 centimes a kilogramme for other articles, and at the same time to reduce from 25 to 10 centimes the surtax, which any country of the Union can levy, over and above the fundamental Union rate of 25 centimes, on letters subject to the above-mentioned sea-transit rate.

If this proposal were actually brought before the Lisbon Congress, there is little doubt that it would be carried, seeing that the large majority of the countries of the Postal Union have no interest in maintaining, but a strong interest in lowering, the present rates for sea-transit; and the same majority, having obtained a reduced sea-transit rate, would be in a position to lower their postage without loss; whereas this country and France, by whom in the main the sea-service of the world is at present performed, would lose enormously on both sides of the reduction.