

spondence with the Swiss Government relative to the form of agreement between the Postal Administration of the Federal Government and that of New Zealand, from which it will be seen that the Swiss Government have decided to discontinue the arrangement into which they had provisionally entered.

2. I have also to transmit to you a copy of a despatch, with enclosures, from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Rome, relative to the unwillingness of the Italian Government to enter into a formal agreement in connection with the same matter, and copies of telegrams which have passed between the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and His Majesty's Minister at Santiago with regard to the attitude of the Chilian Government. I am in correspondence with the Foreign Office as to what course other Foreign States concerned may intend to pursue, and propose to consult the General Post Office as to any further action that can with advantage be taken to effect the wishes of your Government in this connection.

3. I have to add that the Governments of Egypt, Portugal, and Liberia have executed formal agreements in exchange for the instruments which I signed on behalf of your Government.

I have, &c.,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Governor the Right Hon. the Earl of Ranfurly, G.C.M.G., &c.

Enclosures.

MY LORD,—

Berne, 12th July, 1902.

In obedience to the instructions conveyed in Your Lordship's despatch, No. 7 of this series, of the 17th of May last, I addressed a note, of which I have the honour to enclose a copy, to the Swiss Government, inviting them to exchange the Ministerial approval signed by His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, against a similar instrument signed by the responsible Minister whom the Federal Government might designate for the purpose, with a view to ratifying the arrangement arrived at between the Postmaster-General of New Zealand and the Postal Administration of Switzerland.

I have now the honour to enclose a copy of the reply of the Federal Government, in which, I regret to say, they inform me that, after having carefully considered the question, they are unable, in view of the position taken up by the Postal Administrations of the neighbouring countries, and in order not to bind their own hands in the future, to continue the concession made in the fourth paragraph of the letter of the Director-General of the Swiss Posts of the 11th January, 1901; and they add that they will revert to the state of things existing before the 1st January of the same year, as regards the rate imposed on letters coming from New Zealand to Switzerland.

The Swiss Postal Administration, however, in order not to prejudice the interests of the senders or the addressees of such letters, will admit the reduced rate of one penny per fifteen grammes in the case of letters posted before the 30th of September, 1902, inclusive.

After the date in question the Swiss Postal Administration will be compelled to penalise all letters from New Zealand which are not stamped in accordance with the conditions laid down by the Universal Postal Convention of Washington of 15th June, 1897.

I have, &c.,

A. C. GRANT DUFF.

The Marquess of Lansdowne, K.G., &c.

MONSIEUR LE PRESIDENT,—

Berne, 25th June, 1902.

Your Excellency is doubtless aware that the Postmaster-General of New Zealand has come to an arrangement with the Postal Administration of Switzerland, by virtue of which certain changes are effected in postal rates, and for the convenience of reference I have the honour to enclose copies of the correspondence which has passed between Mr. Ward and Mr. Lutz.

This arrangement having been notified to the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union at Berne, the bureau has expressed an opinion that the postage cannot be reduced to places beyond the British Empire by a simple administrative agreement, and considers that such agreement should be concluded between the high contracting parties concerned. This view is, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, technically justified by a literal construction of the second clause in Article 21 of the Postal Convention of Washington.

His Majesty's Government, having considered the matter, have come to the conclusion that the readiest and most expeditious means of putting the matter in order is by means of an interchange of Ministerial approvals of the several arrangements into which the Colony of New Zealand has entered.

The formal approval of His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies of the arrangement concluded between the Postmaster-General of New Zealand and the Postal Administration of Switzerland having been transmitted to me, I have the honour, in accordance with the instructions which I have received from the Marquess of Lansdowne, to invite Your Excellency to exchange it against a similar instrument signed by the responsible Minister whom Your Excellency may designate for that purpose.

I have the honour to enclose a copy of the Ministerial approval which it is proposed should be exchanged.