

maintained intact. The only difference would be that the interpretation would be somewhat more liberal; and the adoption of this tentative course would present the advantage that if, contrary to expectation, the adoption of a liberal attitude on controversial points should result in any serious abuse, it would be possible to revert to a check based on a stricter interpretation.

The difficult question of the "pronounceability" of artificial code-words has also engaged the serious attention of the Postmaster-General.

The privilege of making up artificial code-words has been greatly abused by code-makers. The object of the London Conference was to authorise the use as code of artificial expressions having the appearance of real words and capable of being easily telegraphed; but there has been a tendency on the part of code-makers to form the utmost possible number of combinations without regard to the burden which would be imposed on the telegraph service by the use of uncouth expressions which have no resemblance to real words and which only just pass the test of pronounceability. There would be full justification for the adoption, if practicable, of a much more restrictive definition of pronounceability. Unfortunately the matter does not lend itself to strict regulation; and all that can well be done is, it appears to the Postmaster-General, to provide the Administrations with a means of bringing pressure to bear upon persons who are disposed to take undue advantage of the present liberal regulations. At present, when code-makers are challenged in regard to a breach of the spirit of the regulations, their reply is to point to the letter. They urge, with justice, that all that the regulations explicitly require is that the "artificial words" must be formed of syllables capable of being pronounced according to the usage of one or other of the eight languages; and with this justification they proceed to take a series of syllables, each of which is capable of being pronounced separately according to a combination of letters, however unusual, in one or other of the eight languages, and string them together in a combination which is a mere travesty of a word. Such practices might, in any case, be difficult to prevent, but it is, at all events, undesirable that persons who resort to them should be actually encouraged by having on their side the letter of the regulations.

It will be seen that, having regard to these considerations, the British Administration will propose that the definition in the regulations should be amended so as to provide,—

(1.) That the test of conformity to the usage of one or other of the eight languages should apply to the word as a whole, instead of to each syllable separately, so that any expression containing a collocation of letters which is contrary to the usage of the particular language to which such expression is supposed to conform will not be admitted.

(2.) That the *ordinary* usage of each language should be the test.

The only other question of capital importance dealt with in the propositions of the British Administration is that relating to the "elementary rates" prescribed in Articles XXIII and XXIV of the regulations. The British Administration will again propose the complete assimilation of the rates of the European Administrations for extra-European telegrams to those charged for European telegrams, and the Postmaster-General feels sure that, as in 1903, the British proposal for a reform so beneficial to extra-European correspondence will meet with general assent so far as the extra-European Administrations are concerned.

A communication in similar terms has been sent to the other Telegraph Administrations of the British Empire which adhere to the International Telegraph Union.

I have, &c.,

A. M. OGDON.

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Wellington.

[Tel. 08/822(2).]

#### No. 64.

The Right Hon. the PRIME MINISTER to the HIGH COMMISSIONER

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 1st February, 1908.

INTERNATIONAL Telegraph Conference advised meets Lisbon April. No invitation yet received. Whom do you recommend as New Zealand delegate?

[Tel. 08/822.]

#### No. 65.

The HIGH COMMISSIONER to the Right Hon. the PRIME MINISTER.

(Telegram.)

London, 6th February, 1908.

INTERNATIONAL Telegraph Conference: Colonial Office explains New Zealand has not been invited to send delegates owing to error on the part of the Portuguese Government. Colonial Office approached Portuguese Government for purpose of securing formal invitation. Meanwhile Colonial Office suggests as at present juncture of affairs unavoidable delay may occur you could make arrangements without waiting for invitation. Secondly should be glad to represent New Zealand at Lisbon myself. Reynolds Pacific Cable who is going would advise technical points. Could also cable to you free as regards important questions. Thirdly Reynolds considers desirable New Zealand should have special representative outside Imperial Post Office in view of important questions likely to arise. Fourthly do you require propositions translated English? If so how many copies?

[Tel. 08/822.]