

No. 64.

The Right Hon. the SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES to His Excellency the GOVERNOR.

MY LORD,—

Downing Street, 22nd January, 1909.

With reference to my despatch of the 3rd July last, I have the honour to transmit to you, for the information of your Ministers, the accompanying copy of a letter which has been addressed by the International Telegraphic Bureau at Berne to the General Post Office, on the subject of the adherence of the Government of New Zealand to the Radiotelegraphic Convention.

2. It will be seen from this letter that the Telegraphic Bureau have misunderstood the effect of the adherence of His Majesty's Government which was made simultaneously with the notification of the adherence of those colonies which decided to join the Radiotelegraphic Convention.

3. The Postmaster-General has, therefore, informed the Bureau that the separate adhesion of New Zealand holds good, and that the Dominion should be charged with its proper contribution, as a member of the fourth class, towards the expenses of the Bureau, and should be supplied direct with all documents to which it is entitled as a member of that class.

4. I should be glad to learn whether the documents are duly received.

5. I have to request that I may be informed by telegraph whether your Government is willing to begin their contribution from the 1st January, 1907, after which date the Bureau began to incur expenditure in connection with the Radiotelegraphic Convention.

I have, &c.,

Governor the Right Hon. Lord Plunket, K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., &c.

CREWE.

[Tel. 09/344(2).]

Enclosure in No. 64.

The DIRECTOR, International Bureau of the Telegraph Union, Berne, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, London.

SIR,—

Berne, 28th November, 1908.

The General Post Office, Wellington, advised me by letter dated 27th November, 1907 [No 95, F.-8, 1908], published in Notification No. 5 of 1st February last, that it had decided to adhere to the International Radiotelegraphic Convention, and that the New Zealand Government wished to be ranked in the fourth class as regards its contribution to the additional expenditure of the International Bureau incurred in respect of the radiotelegraphic branch. So far, however, I have received no notification through the diplomatic channel of this adhesion, as provided by Article 16 of the Berlin Convention.

On the other hand, you advise me by your letters of 30th June last [not printed] and 16th July [not printed] that the British Government adhered to the Radiotelegraphic Convention on behalf of all its possessions, colonies, and protectorates, with the single exceptions of Newfoundland and Orange River Colony.

The conclusion to be drawn from this last communication is that New Zealand does not adhere as a separate unit, and that the original decision of the New Zealand Administration is cancelled. New Zealand would, consequently, be included in the adhesion of your Government, and would not contribute as a distinct signatory State to the expenses of the International Bureau. The same would also apply to the other British possessions, colonies, and protectorates for which your Government has declared its adhesion.

This question is closely connected with the distribution of the official documents of this Bureau.

The documents relating to radiotelegraphy published by the International Bureau are distributed to the Administrations of the contracting States in proportion to the number of contributory units, as is done in the case in the Telegraph Union. In this way, your office, belonging to the first class, receives twenty-five free copies of all radiotelegraphic publications except circulars, of which I forward you, until further advice, only one copy. I shall therefore forward you for the future, in accordance with your letter of 13th November, fifty copies of the notifications, twenty-five of which will be free, and the remainder charged for at the rate of 5 centimes per copy and per page.

As regards the offices of the British colonies in so far as they have relations with the International Bureau as members of the Telegraph Union, I shall also send them radiotelegraphic notifications as annexes to the ordinary notifications, as well as radiotelegraphic circulars, since the information on radiotelegraphy which these documents contain seems to be indispensable to all Administrations.

On the other hand, as regards other radiotelegraphic documents, a free distribution does not seem to be warranted in respect of the Administrations of non-signatory States of the Radiotelegraphic Convention. The Cape, Orange River, and New Zealand offices will therefore have no right to a free supply as they suppose. As it is, these offices inform me, in reply to my Radiotelegraphic Circular No. 6, of 6th August, 1908, that the copies supplied free of charge will meet their requirements. They therefore count on this supply, whilst if the adhesion of Great Britain to the Radiotelegraphic Convention of Berlin comprises all the British colonies, including New Zealand, your Administration alone is entitled to a free supply. Kindly let me know whether the twenty-five copies supplied free are to be sent to the General Post Office, London, or whether they are to be distributed amongst the various colonial offices, and in what proportions.

I have the honour to ask you to let me know whether you approve of my views with regard to the questions I have just submitted to you.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, General Post Office, London.

E. FREY, Director.

[Tel. 09/344(2).]