

No. 50.

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

Westminster Chambers, 13 Victoria Street, London S.W.,
7th December, 1911.

SIR,—

Referring to my letter of the 22nd ultimo [not printed], and to previous correspondence with regard to Press cablegrams at deferred rate, I have the honour to state that the introduction of this deferred Press cable rate service has been anticipated, and instead of commencing on the 1st January next it was partially started on the 6th instant, and will come into operation fully on the 15th instant. I accordingly telegraphed you yesterday.

A cutting from *The Times*, giving the Postmaster-General's speech in the House of Commons on the 5th instant announcing the commencement of this deferred-rate service, is annexed. [See Enclosure in No. 51.]

I have, &c.,

WM. HALL-JONES.

The Right Hon. the Prime Minister, Wellington, New Zealand.

[P.C. Press 12/6.]

No. 51.

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

MY LORD,—

Downing Street, 8th December, 1911.

With reference to my despatch of the 7th December, I have the honour to transmit to you, for the information of your Ministers, the accompanying copy of a statement made by the Postmaster-General in the House of Commons on the 5th December with regard to reductions in telegraph rates.

I have, &c.,

L. HARCOURT.

Governor the Right Hon. Lord Islington, K.C.M.G., D.S.O., &c.

[P.C. Press 11/86-90.]

Enclosure in No. 51.

[Extract from Official Report, 5th December.]

PRESS CABLEGRAMS (BRITISH EMPIRE).—REDUCED RATES.

Mr. CROFT asked the Postmaster-General whether he can yet give any information with regard to the improvement in cable-communication between the Mother-country and the dominions.

Sir GEORGE TOULMIN asked the Postmaster-General whether, in view of the resolutions passed at the Imperial Conference in favour of an improvement in cable-communication between this country and the self-governing dominions, he is in a position to announce the result of any steps he has been able to take to give effect to those resolutions?

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL.—A strong desire was expressed by the dominion representatives at the Imperial Conference for the cheaper transmission of Press cablegrams between the various portions of the Empire. With this desire His Majesty's Government are in cordial sympathy, regarding the easy communication of information of common interest as of prime importance in strengthening the cohesion of the Empire. I have been in correspondence with the Western Union Telegraph Company of the United States in connection with the leasing by that company of the cables of the Anglo-American Telegraph Company and of the Direct United States Company. The cables of the Atlantic companies are fully employed during a few hours of the day, but less fully during the remaining hours. I am glad to be able to announce that, in view of this fact, the three companies referred to have consented to accept Press messages which are not of an urgent character, and which may be postponed to the more urgent traffic, at one-half of the present rates. For the present the deferment may be less, but will not be more, than nineteen hours reckoned from the clock time of acceptance in the country of origin to the clock time of delivery in the country of destination, except that, if the cables are congested, some further delay may be unavoidable. I have also obtained the consent of the Pacific Cable Board and of the Australian Government to a similar reduction in their charges for Press messages of this class. The tariff of the New Zealand Government was already very low, and a further diminution was not asked. The effect will be that the rates for these deferred Press telegrams between the United Kingdom on the one hand, and Canada, as well as the United States, on the other, will be 2½d. a word instead of 5d. as now; and between the United Kingdom and Australia and New Zealand the rate will be 4½d. a word instead of 9d. I am in communication with the Commercial Cable Company also on this question. I regret that I have not yet been able to arrange for a similar reduction in cablegrams to and from India and South Africa, but the Eastern Telegraph Company has consented to carry the Australasian cablegrams at the reduced rate in the event of interruption to the Pacific cable. The service will come into full operation on the 15th instant, but the Western Union, Anglo-American, and Direct United States companies will be prepared to accept the Press telegrams at the reduced rates at their own offices on and from to-morrow. The Western Union Company proposes also, of its own initiative, to establish at once for the use of the public a system of so-called "night letters" and "week-end letters" between this country and places in Canada and the United States. These will be plain-language cablegrams carried at largely reduced rates. "Night letters" will be delivered on the morning of the second day after they are handed in. The charge per word will be rather more than quarter the usual rate, with a