

(No. 47.)



1879.

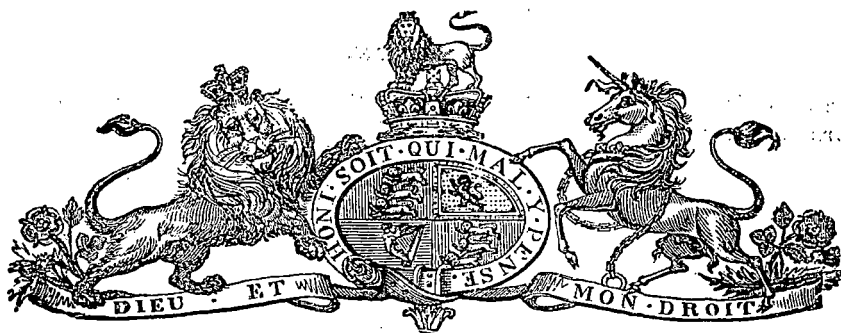
TASMANIA.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

BRINDISI ROUTE FOR EUROPEAN MAILS :

CORRESPONDENCE.

Laid upon the Table by the Colonial Treasurer, and ordered by the House to be printed, September 19, 1879.



BRINDISI ROUTE FOR EUROPEAN MAILS.

MEMORANDUM FOR MINISTERS.

I AM desired by Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies to inform the Government of Tasmania, that it is proposed from January next to abandon the Southampton route for mails, and to send everything by Brindisi, at the following rates:—

Newspapers to be charged at Three Halfpence for four ounces.

Letters, Seven Pence.

Book Packets, Patterns, Three Halfpence for two ounces.

Newspapers and Letters that may be addressed specially to be sent by private ship will pay the rates now paid *viâ* Southampton.

The Secretary of State wishes to receive the opinion of the Government of Tasmania on this question.

FRED. A. WELD.

Government House, August 28th, 1879.

FORWARDED to the Honorable the Colonial Treasurer.

THOS. REIBEY.

29th August, 1879.

FORWARDED to the Secretary to the Post Office for his report.

D. LEWIS, *Colonial Treasurer.*
30. 8. 79.

REPORT attached.

A. C. D.
11. 9. 79.

MEMO. FOR HON. COLONIAL TREASURER.

THE proposal referred to in the annexed "Memorandum for Ministers" from His Excellency the Governor, dated 28th August ultimo, is one that, I believe, will meet with very much disfavour throughout the Colony, as it really amounts to an increase of postage, compelling, as it would do, those who usually forward their correspondence *viâ* Southampton to pay an extra Penny upon each single letter, $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ upon 2oz. packets, and $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ upon each newspaper.

As newspapers are now sent free of postage, and as nearly all the newspapers from this Colony to England are transmitted *viâ* Southampton, the compulsory payment for newspapers of $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ each will, I am sure, be especially objected to by the public. The small reduction proposed on Brindisi correspondence will not compensate for the loss of the cheaper Southampton route, which is now so largely availed of by the general public; the letters *viâ* Southampton being about 40 per cent. more numerous than those *viâ* Brindisi, by which route about two hundred newspapers per month are forwarded, while by the Southampton route the average number transmitted monthly is about four thousand.

In the event, however, of the proposal being carried out, it will be necessary to obtain from London new postage stamps of the value of Seven Pence and Three Halfpence.

A. C. DOUGLAS, *Secretary.*

General Post Office, Hobart Town, 11th September, 1879.

TELEGRAM.

Re proposal of Secretary of State to discontinue Southampton route for European Mails, and send all *viâ* Brindisi—what action do you intend taking? Please reply.

Postmaster-General, Victoria.

D. LEWIS, *Colonial Treasurer.*
13th September, 1879.

TELEGRAM.

Melbourne, 17th September, 1879.

THIS Department has strongly objected to discontinuance of Southampton service, it having been notified that existing arrangements would be continued. South Australia has done the same. I think all the colonies should join in protest.

Colonial Treasurer.

J. B. PATTERSON, *Postmaster-General.*

Colonial Treasury, Hobart Town, 18th September, 1879.

MEMORANDUM.

WITH reference to His Excellency's Memorandum of the 28th August, 1879, notifying for the information of the Government of Tasmania that it is proposed by the Imperial Government to abandon the Southampton route for the conveyance of Mails from January next, and to forward all correspondence *viâ* Brindisi after that date, the Colonial Treasurer desires to point out that the proposed change is one that will meet with great disfavour throughout the Colony, on account of the increased postage the public will be compelled to pay upon all correspondence usually forwarded by way of Southampton, viz., an extra penny upon each single letter, three halfpence upon two ounce packets, and three halfpence upon each newspaper, newspapers being now sent *viâ* Southampton free of postage.

The small reduction proposed on Brindisi correspondence will not compensate for the loss of the cheaper Southampton route, which is now so largely availed of by the general public, the letters sent by this route being about forty per cent. more numerous than those *viâ* Brindisi, by which route two hundred papers per month are transmitted, while by Southampton the average is four thousand per month.

The Colonial Treasurer trusts that, as the change will so seriously alter existing arrangements, His Excellency the Governor will be pleased to protest on the part of this Colony against any change whatever being made by which the Southampton route will be discontinued in favour of the more costly one *viâ* Brindisi.

D. LEWIS, *Colonial Treasurer and Postmaster-General.*

His Excellency the Governor.

[In continuation of Paper No. 48, L.C.]

TASMANIA.
No. 42.

Downing-street, 26th August, 1879.

SIR,

ON the 25th instant I communicated to you by telegram through the Governor of South Australia the arrangements proposed for the transmission *via* Brindisi after January next (when the existing Contract with the Peninsular and Oriental Company will expire) of the Eastern and Australian Mails, and the proposed abandonment of the service *via* Southampton.

I now enclose for the information of your Government copies of a correspondence between the Treasury and this Department upon which that telegram was founded.

I have, &c.,

M. E. HICKS BEACH.

*The Officer administering the Government
of Tasmania.*

Copy.

12,488
79.

The Treasury to the Colonial Office.

Treasury Chambers, 3rd July, 1879.

SIR,

I AM directed by the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury to transmit to you herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, copy of a letter from the Postmaster-General, dated the 17th instant, respecting future arrangements for the conveyance of the portion of the Eastern Mails now carried *via* Southampton, and I am to request you to move Secretary Sir Michael Hicks Beach to favour my Lords with any observations he may have to offer in regard to the proposals contained therein so far as they affect the correspondence with the Australian Colonies, New Zealand, Ceylon, the Straits Settlements, and Hong-Kong.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) H. SELWIN IBBETSON.

The Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office.

Copy.

99,770.

The Post Office to the Treasury.

General Post Office, 17th July, 1879.

MY LORDS,

WHEN the arrangements were made last year for the Sea Conveyance of the Eastern Mails after the 1st February next, when the existing contract with the Peninsular and Oriental Company will expire, it was determined to make no provision for a service between Southampton and Suez, and accordingly that line is omitted in the new contract.

It remains now to consider by what means the correspondence, which is at present being forwarded by the Southampton route, shall be sent after February.

In the early part of this year I put myself in communication with the Post Offices of France and Italy, for the purpose of ascertaining what abatement they would respectively be willing to make in the amount of the transit rates now paid to those Offices for the special weekly conveyance between Calais and Brindisi of the accelerated portion of the Eastern Mails, provided the whole of the correspondence of every description was forwarded by that route.

It is only very recently that I have received a definite reply from Italy.

The following is the result. The French office will agree to reduce its transit rates from—

15 frs. 52c.	per kilo.	for letters.
60½c.	„	for newspapers.
1 fr. 21c.	„	for books,
to 10 frs.	„	for letters.
50c.	other articles,	

And the Italian Post Office will reduce its rates of

100 frs. per kilo. for letters, 50c. other articles, by about 35 per cent.

These concessions would reduce the special transit charges on letters by about 9 francs per kilogramme, leaving payable about 16½ francs per kilogramme, and after full consideration I have come to the conclusion that it will be desirable to accept the offers made and to send the entire mail by the route of Brindisi and by the weekly mail.

In a correspondence which I have had with the Director-General of the Indian Post Office, he expressed an opinion that when the Southampton Mail Packets are withdrawn, all letters, &c., paid at the Southampton rate of postage should be forwarded *via* Brindisi, by the ordinary mail trains of France and Italy, so as to obtain the benefit of the ordinary union transit rates.

But I cannot advise such an arrangement, which could not fail to give rise to much dissatisfaction.

In the case of the outward mails, supposing the accelerated mail to be despatched from London on the evening of every Friday, as at present, and a packet to leave Brindisi early on Monday morning, letters sent by the ordinary trains might be posted in London up till the evening of a previous day (Thursday) and reach Brindisi in time to catch the packet.

In the opposite direction the mails for England reaching Brindisi from the East would, if sent through Italy and France by the ordinary trains, arrive in London only about 24 hours after the express mail; or if a Sunday intervened both portions of the mails might be delivered together.

The consequence of this would be that the bulk of the letters would assuredly be diverted from the quick to the slow Mail, seeing that the difference in time would be so trifling.

If such were the case there would be a risk that on the one hand the payments to France and Italy for the accelerated Service might be diminished to an extent which would lead to a demand for higher transit rates, and that on the other hand the weight of correspondence sent by the ordinary trains might become so great as to impose extraordinary charges for its conveyance, and thus induce the French and Italian Offices to decline to accept the ordinary Union transit rates.

The right course in my opinion is, as I have said, to send the whole of the Eastern Mails by the Accelerated Service.

At the same time I propose that the single rate of postage to be levied on letters to or from India, China, &c. should not exceed 5 pence, which is one penny less than the present Brindisi rate, and one penny more than the Southampton rate, which was reduced from sixpence to fourpence on the 1st April last.

In the case of letters to Australia the rate would be 7d.

The amount derived from the supplementary charge of 1d. per half-ounce will not be quite sufficient to cover the payments to France and Italy, but the loss which will fall upon the department will probably be less than we should have to pay to the Peninsular and Oriental Company, or any other Company by whose vessels the slow portion of the mails might be sent between England and Suez.

I have accordingly to request the authority of your Lordships to adopt the arrangements which I have here proposed.

Before coming to a decision your Lordships will no doubt consult the Secretary of State for India, as the Indian Government bears a portion of the expense of the Eastern Mail contract, and will also refer to Sir Michael Hicks Beach the proposal, so far as it affects the charge on letters exchanged with the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, or with Ceylon, the Straits Settlements, or Hong Kong.

I have, &c.

(Signed) JOHN MANNERS.

The Lords Commissioners of the Treasury.

The Colonial Office to the Treasury.

Downing-street, 30th July, 1879.

SIR,

I AM directed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23rd instant, enclosing a copy of a letter from the Postmaster-General respecting future arrangements for the conveyance of the Eastern and Australian Mails now carried *via* Southampton and *via* Brindisi.

With regard to the proposal contained therein, so far as it affects the correspondence with the Colonies concerned, viz., that the Mails shall in future be carried *via* Brindisi alone, I am to request that you will move the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury to cause Sir Michael Hicks Beach to

be informed what are the proposed rates for books and papers; and secondly, whether as the raising of the minimum postal charge would appear to bear hardly on the poorer classes, it might not be arranged that letters, &c., should still be conveyed as far as Suez by the numerous steamers trading between this country and the East, as "Ship Letters" at the present, or even a lower rate.

I am, &c.

(Signed) R. G. W. HERBERT.

The Secretary to the Treasury.

Copy.
13,809.

The Treasury to the Colonial Office.

Treasury Chambers, 14th August, 1879.

SIR,

I AM directed by the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury to transmit to you herewith for the information of Secretary Sir Michael Hicks Beach, with reference to your letter of the 30th ultimo respecting the Eastern and Australian Mail Service, copy of a letter which my Lords have received from the Postmaster-General, dated the 8th instant.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) WILLIAM LAW.

R. G. W. HERBERT, *Esq., Colonial Office.*

The Post Office to the Treasury.

General Post Office, 8th August, 1879.

MY LORDS,

IN returning the enclosed reference from the Treasury, No. 13241, of the 1st ultimo, I have the honor to state, in reply to the first question raised by Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, that, in the event of the Eastern and Australian Mails being forwarded *viâ* Brindisi alone, as recommended in my report to your Lordships, dated the 17th ultimo, I should propose to fix the Postage Rates upon Newspapers, Books, &c., as follows:—

Newspapers, at 1½*d.* per 4 ounces, in lieu of the present rates of 1*d.* *viâ* Southampton, and 2*d.* *viâ* Brindisi.

Book Packets, Patterns, &c., at 1½*d.* per 2 ounces, in lieu of the present rates of 1*d.* per ounce *viâ* Southampton, and 2*d.* per ounce *viâ* Brindisi.

As regards the question of sending extra mails as far as Suez by the steamers trading between this country and the East as ship letters, I beg leave to inform you that, in accordance with the general practice of this office, any letters or newspapers which the senders might specially address for transmission by private ship would be forwarded as desired. Such letters, &c., would be liable only to the present rates of postage chargeable by the Southampton route.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) JOHN MANNERS.

The Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury.

TELEGRAM.

Melbourne, 5th January, 1880.

SOUTHAMPTON and Suez Contract being abandoned by the Imperial Government, this Government purpose to send all Mails, after January, *viâ* Brindisi, and charge present Southampton rates on letters, packets, and newspapers. Division of postage between Imperial and Colonial Governments to be matter of future arrangements; for the present other colonies to account to Victoria. Same rates as now. Your concurrence invited in transmission of Mails by fortnightly service *viâ* Brindisi, in accordance with foregoing. Favour of early reply requested.

GRAHAM BERRY, *Chief Secretary.*

Colonial Secretary, Tasmania.

TELEGRAM.

TELEGRAM of 5th received. Government await reply to my letter of 8th December. In meantime cannot concur in proposed arrangement as to rates, which are too low for Tasmania.

COLONIAL SECRETARY.

8th January, '80.

To Chief Secretary, Victoria.