

(No. 3.)



1872.

SESSION II.

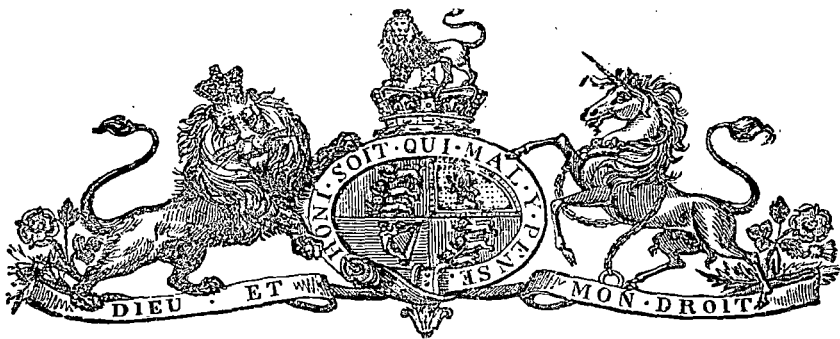
T A S M A N I A.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

DESPATCH.

POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND
THE AUSTRALASIAN COLONIES.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Wilson, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
October 23, 1872.



CIRCULAR.

4th September, 1872.

SIR,

I TRANSMIT to you a copy of a letter from the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, containing proposals for a New Postal Service with the Australasian Colonies on the termination of the present Contract with the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company at the end of the year 1873.

I request that you will inform me of the views of your Government on their Lordships' proposals.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

KIMBERLEY.

Governor DU CANE.

(Copy.)

Treasury Chambers, 14th August, 1872.

SIR,

I AM commanded by the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury to request that you will state to the Earl of Kimberley, with reference to the correspondence that has recently taken place relative to the Packet Service between this country and the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, that my Lords have given this subject their attentive consideration.

My Lords would observe that the several Colonies (with the exception of West Australia) having requested that an end should be put to the contract under which the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company now convey the Australian Mails between Point de Galle and Sydney, the necessary notice has been given to the Company, and the contract will expire at the end of next year (1873).

It therefore becomes necessary to determine in what manner, and by what route, the postal communication should be maintained when the contract in question comes to an end.

The several routes which have been suggested are—

- 1st—The present route viâ Suez and Point de Galle;
- 2nd—As an alternative route, the route viâ San Francisco; and
- 3rd—(Incidentally) the route viâ the Cape of Good Hope.

The advantages, however, attendant upon the present route appear to my Lords to be so conclusive that they are decidedly of opinion that it should not be changed.

The advantages are, first, that it is the shortest; and, secondly, that, by making use of the vessels under contract with Her Majesty's Government for the India and China Service as far as Point de Galle, the carriage of the Australian Mails is provided for a considerable portion of the distance over which they have to be conveyed.

As several of the Australian Colonies have, on repeated occasions, complained of the manner in which the service between Point de Galle and Australia has been performed, and so much difficulty has hitherto been experienced by the Home Government in providing a service satisfactory to the Colonies, my Lords have come to the conclusion that it is not advisable that the Imperial Government should any longer be parties to any contract for the service between Point de Galle and Australia, but that it would be better that the Colonies should, at the expiration of the present contract, themselves, in combination, provide such service, leaving it to the Imperial Government to provide for the conveyance of the Mails between England and Point de Galle.

A considerable sum has hitherto been contributed by the Australian Colonies and New Zealand towards the expense of the conveyance of their Mails between this Country and Point de Galle; my Lords propose, at the termination of the present Point de Galle and Australian contract, to relieve the Colonies from any payment on this account, and to undertake on the part of the Imperial Government, so long as the present contract for the India and China Mail Service is in existence, (that is, until the 31st January, 1880,) to convey the Colonial Mails between England and Point de Galle and *vice versa* free of all charge to the Colonies, on the Colonies, in combination, providing an efficient line of packets, fitted at Point de Galle to the Suez and China Packets, to run once every four weeks (or once every fortnight, whichever the Colonies may deem most essential to their own interests) between Point de Galle and whatever port or ports in Australia the Colonies may themselves consider most expedient, and *vice versa*, and my Lords will be prepared to contribute a sum not exceeding one-half of the expense of a four-weekly service between Point de Galle and the Australian Colonies and New Zealand (in the event of the latter Colony becoming a party to the arrangement), subject, however, to the *distinct limitation*, that the contribution to be made on the part of the Imperial Government in any one year shall in no case exceed £40,000, and on the understanding that the Packets shall call at King George's Sound to land and embark the West Australian Mails; that Colony being, however, called upon to pay her share, in proportion to her correspondence, towards the expense of the Packet Service between Point de Galle and Australia; and, in the event of the Colonies arranging conjointly or by a substantial majority for a fortnightly service, my Lords will be prepared to entertain the question of a further contribution.

But this undertaking is given upon the express condition that any second service towards which the Imperial Government may render assistance is alternative with the other, *i.e.*, that there shall be sufficient interval between the arrival and departure of the steamers for the purposes of correspondence.

As it appears from the letter from the Colonial Office dated the 24th ultimo, and its enclosures, that it is the wish of the Government of Queensland that the correspondence of that Colony shall be conveyed once every four weeks *via* Torres Straits, my Lords have no objection, on the part of the Imperial Government, to conveying such correspondence between England and Singapore free of all charge, but they are not prepared to make any contribution towards a service between Singapore and Brisbane, which must be left to the Colony to provide.

My Lords have only to state in conclusion that the arrangement at present in force as regards the division of the postage on the Mail matter conveyed between this country and the Australian Colonies should not be disturbed.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

CHARLES W. STRONGE,
pro. Sec.

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