

1854-5.

VICTORIA.

CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING

REDUCTION OF GRATUITIES

FOR

CONVEYANCE OF SHIP LETTERS.

*LAIID upon the COUNCIL TABLE by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, by Command of HIS EXCELLENCY THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, and ordered by the COUNCIL to be printed, 30th January, 1855.*

CIRCULAR.

[No. 6.]

*The Right Honorable the Secretary of State to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor.*

Downing-street, 15th August, 1854.

SIR,

I transmit herewith the copy of a letter which has been addressed to this department by direction of the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, enclosing copy of a letter from the Postmaster General, in which it is recommended that a reduction be made in the gratuities paid to masters of vessels, pilots, boatmen, and others for the conveyance of ship letters. I have to instruct you to bring the recommendation of the Postmaster General under the consideration of your Executive Council, with a view to the proposed reduction being effected in the Colony under your Government.

I have, &c.,

(Signed)

G. GREY.

Lieutenant Governor,

Sir C. Hotham,

&c., &c., &c.

*Enclosure in Letter from the Right Honorable the Secretary of State to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, dated 15th August, 1854.*

Treasury Chambers, 11th August, 1854.

SIR,

I am commanded by the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury to transmit to you herewith, for the information of Sir George Grey, copy of letter from the Postmaster General, dated 13th February last, recommending a reduction in the gratuities paid to masters of vessels, pilots, boatmen, and others, for conveyance of ship letters, and I have to request that you will move the Secretary of State to cause the necessary communications to be made to the Governors of those Colonies which have the direction of their own postal arrangements, with a view to their co-operation in the proposed plan for the reduction of gratuities to the rates mentioned in Lord Canning's said communication.

I have, &c.,

(Signed)

JAMES WILSON.

H. Merivale, Esq.

A.—No. 48.

## SUB-ENCLOSURE.

*To the Right Honorable the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury.*

MY LORDS,

In submitting to the Treasury the general scheme for a reduction of postage upon letters between the United Kingdom and the British Colonies (which under the authority of your Lordships I am about to carry partially into effect), my predecessor, in his letter dated the 27th April, 1852, proposed, as a part of the measure, that a reduction to the extent of one-half should be made in the gratuities and allowances paid to the masters of vessels, the officers of Customs, boatmen, and others, on account of their services in conveying, landing, and otherwise facilitating the delivery to the Post Office of ship letter mails.

Referring to the above communication, I now submit for your Lordships' consideration and approval, an arrangement respecting those Colonies to which the scheme for the reduction of postage is about to be applied, or to which it may hereafter be extended.

Your Lordships are aware, that in accordance with one part of the plan, the sea postage on letters conveyed by private ships will (when the postal direction of the Colony is under our control) be equally divided between the Colony and the Mother Country, just as in the case of packet postage. It is fair, therefore, that the expenses also connected with the conveyance of letters by private ships should be equally divided, which is not at present the case, the colonial gratuities to the masters of private ships being, I believe, on an average (for they are variable) not more than about half the British gratuities.

With regard to those Colonies of which we have the postal direction, I do not propose to make any change in the gratuities, but with respect to all other Colonies to which the plan for the reduction of postage may be applied, I recommend, as proposed by my predecessor, that the British gratuities should be reduced by one-half; and I further recommend, that so far as relates to the gratuities to the masters (which are those of most importance), the Secretary of State for the Colonies be requested to use his influence with the Governments of those Colonies to give the same gratuities as those which I propose that we should now grant. If the Colonial Governments should concur in this, the gratuity on each letter to the master of a private ship, bound to any Colony having its own postal arrangements, which is at present about three pence on an average (viz., two pence paid in this country, and one penny in the Colony), would be twopence, viz., one penny at each end of the voyage, and the gratuity to the master of a private ship bound to any Colony of which we have the postal direction would be the same, with this difference, that the whole of the gratuity would be paid in this country, instead of a penny being paid here and a penny in the Colony. As the reduction of postage will no doubt be followed by an increase in the number of letters, while such increase will add little or nothing to the trouble of the captains, pilots, and other recipients of the gratuities, the remuneration under the arrangements which I propose will probably in a short time be as great as at present, if not greater. If your Lordships should concur in my proposal, the gratuities to be paid by this department, on letters and newspapers between the United Kingdom and the Colonies, to which the plan of a reduced rate of postage may be applied will be as follows:—

1. To the master of a private ship for the conveyance of mails to or from this country, one penny per letter, and a halfpenny per newspaper.
2. To pilots and boatmen for bringing ashore mails from homeward bound ships in the British channel, a halfpenny for each letter.
3. To the Custom House officers for sending to the Post Office letters landed at Gravesend, from private ships arriving from abroad, three farthings for each letter.

Any other allowances made by this department in respect of the delivery to the Post Office of ship letters will be reduced in the same proportion, viz., to one-half.

I have, &c.,

(Signed)

CANNING.

General Post Office,

13th February, 1854.