

403

Memo. No. 20.

The Great Council makes the following inquiries: -

First. What will be the expense to His Imperial Majesty's Government of establishing meteorological stations in Japan in conformity with the recommendations made in Memo. No. 17?

Second. What sort of a communication should be addressed to Mr. Hart in reply to his note of the 5th of August, and his despatch No. 74 to Mr. Soyechima, forwarding certain documents?

Third. In case the Great Council should decide upon establishing meteorological stations in conformity with the recommendations made in Memo. No. 17, would it be necessary to address the foreign ministers on the subject?

Fourth. What steps should be taken by His Imperial Majesty's Government in contemplation of any emergencies likely to arise from the adoption of the recommendations made in Memo. No. 17?

Reply to the first question.

In reply to the first question I would say that, should the new meteorological service be placed, as recommended, under the control of the Navy Department, one of the foreign professors of the Naval Academy should be directed to at once commence teaching the midshipmen and non-commissioned officers who, doubtless, will be promptly detailed to serve in the newly-created corps, in the use of the various instruments which they will have to employ in taking their observations, and in making their returns of the same, so that they may be capable of entering upon the discharge of their new duties as soon as the required arrangements shall have been made with the Chinese Government, and the instruments promised by Mr. Hart, received. This officer, with the aid of the engineers attached to the Navy Department, and the clerks in charge of the various lighthouses, could easily make an estimate of the expense of

installing the officers of the meteorological corps at their various stations; and inasmuch as all the observations can be taken in almost any sort of a building, and the instruments used in taking them are light and occupy but very little space, this expense can not be considerable.

The expense of organizing the staff will be nil, as the persons composing it would be detached from the Navy and would not expect to be paid any other salary than that which they would receive in any case.

In what relates to the sending of telegrams to the China stations, it is very probable that, if an offer be made by Japan to transmit, free of charge, through her own lines, all the weather news that may be received from the China stations, the Danish Company at Shanghai will consent, in return, to transmit ^{also free,} all such news as the Government of Japan may itself have to transmit. But should that Company refuse to do this, then the administration of H. M.'s Government

Telegraphs would be justified in charging the regular fees for the transmission through its own lines of all such news as would be sent from China, and the income thus received would probably about balance the outlay to which H. S. M.'s Government would be subjected in forwarding, through other lines than its own, weather news from Yokohama or Nagasaki to the China stations or elsewhere. However, the question might be submitted, for serious investigation, to the Japanese Consul at Shanghai, and to the Superintendent of H. S. M.'s Government Telegraphs, who could easily ascertain from Lieutenant Dreyer, the present director of the Great Northern Telegraph Company at Shanghai, what arrangements could be made for transmitting the observations made by the Japanese meteorological corps on an economical plan.

The expense of forwarding the periodical communications to the Shanghai office by mail would be

so inconsiderable, that it is not worth while mentioning it here. The same observation will apply to stationery.

Reply to the second question.

Regarding the second question; I would advise that the following informal note be addressed to Mr. Hall by the Secretary for Foreign Affairs:—

"Your note and enclosure to my predecessor were received by me, and I beg you to accept my thanks for the same.

"The utility of the measure recommended by you in connection with the establishment of meteorological stations, has been fully appreciated. Copies of all the documents which you had the goodness to submit together with the views of the Great Council to which the same were referred, have been forwarded to the Japanese Chargé d'affaires at Peking, who, doubtless, will place himself

in communication with you for the further consideration of the matter."

The foregoing letter should be sent to Mr. Hart through the Japanese Chargé d'affaires at Peking, with the following communication:

"In September last, Mr. Hart, Inspector-General of the Imperial Maritime Customs in China, had the goodness to address my predecessor, forwarding information which the Japanese Ambassador had unofficially asked from him while in Peking; and the gentleman improved the opportunity to submit to this Government a scheme for the establishment of meteorological stations from Paoetta to Singapore and Batavia, as is better explained in an official despatch and enclosures addressed to this Department, copies of which, marked A, are sent herewith.

"No reply has yet been made to Mr. Hart's communication; but the scheme recommended by him has been judged so important that it

was promptly referred to the Great Council (Enclosure marked B), and has received the favorable consideration of that high body; and I so inform Mr. Hart in an unofficial note which is sent through you, and a copy of which is enclosed, marked C.

"The Department will wait the expression of your views as to the arrangements that should be made with the Government of China for the carrying out of Mr. Hart's scheme, as suggested in enclosure marked B, before placing itself in official communication with that gentleman by replying to his despatch of the 5th of August."

"Mr. Hart has informed his department that it had been decided to commence, from the 1st of January, 1874, to record observations at twenty stations in China, and as it may be desirable to him that similar stations should be established in Japan as soon as possible, I would thank you to favor me with a reply at your earliest convenience."

Reply to the third question.

The foreign ministers need not be addressed on the subject at present.

Reply to the fourth question.

For the present, no other steps than those above indicated should be taken in connection with the recommendations contained in Memo. No. 17.

December 26th, 1873.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ch. W. Le Gendre

His Excellency
The Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Memo. No. 20.

December 26th, 1873.

李氏第廿拾号覽書
天氣日報一併