

Yedo April 19. 1870

The undersigned, acting in conjunction with his colleagues has the honour to acknowledge the receipt of their Excellencies despatch of the 11th December last announcing the changes which the Japanese Government propose to introduce into their monetary system, and the Course to be adopted by the Mint in assining bullion and foreign and Japanese coin. He learns therefrom that the Japanese Government intend to issue a standard silver coin of the same weight and fineness as the Mexican dollar, which will form it appears the ^{only} legal tender for payment of large amount, while four silver fractional coins together with three gold coins and two copper coins — the respective precise weight and fineness of which have not yet been determined — are intended as coins of Government and to be used in making payments of small amounts only.

While recognizing that the above mentioned measures bear a pre-eminently internal character, the undersigned wishes to point out to their Excellencies that it would be in the general interest of Commerce, and in accordance with the practice of all other countries if the Japanese government would fix by law the amounts for which the fractional silver coin as well as the

Their
Excellencies Gold and Copper coins may be tendered as
Sawa furami Kyowara no noryoshi

Terasima fuchii fujiwara no munemori
Ministers for Foreign affairs.

as legal payments.

With regard to the Cost of Coinage which their Excellencies wish to fix at not less than three per cent in the first instance, the undersigned is ready to enter into negotiations with them on this subject, but he desires at the same time to draw their attention to the stipulations of those Treaties which have been concluded since the Convention of 1866, by which the Japanese Government agreed to furnish facilities for the exchange of bullion or foreign coin for Japanese coin at all the Ports & places open to foreign trade, and he wishes to be informed as to the measures which the Government propose to adopt in order to carry these stipulations into effect.

Their Excellencies proceed to observe that the Mint will furnish new coins for bullion and for foreign or Japanese coin according to the ascertained bullion content of each tender, but that the Government will not supply new coin for old at any fixed exchange or according to any nominal value.

With regard to bullion and foreign coin, it has already been stipulated by the Convention of June 25, 1866, as well as by the subsequent Treaties, that these shall be exchanged for Japanese coin of the same intrinsic value less only the cost of coinage. In the case of Japanese money the same rule would naturally be observed, both with those coins which have ceased to be habitually used in commerce, as well as with those which form the present circulating medium of the country

were it not that there exists serious apprehensions that the fineness of the silver *bu* and of the gilt *nibu* now current has been secretly altered, and that these coins therefore do not contain the intrinsic value they should possess according to Treaty stipulations, and the declaration made to the foreign Representatives by the Japanese Government.

By the Convention of June 25, 1866, as well as by the subsequent Treaties, the silver *bu* is declared to be nine-tenths fine and to weigh 134 grains Troy, and by a communication addressed by the Japanese Government to all the Foreign representatives on the 21st August 1869, the weight of the *nibu* now current is given at 0.8 mmonme, and its component parts at 0.176 mmonme gold and ~~seventy eight per cent silver~~ 0.624 silver (i.e. twenty two per cent gold and seventy eight per cent silver).

In view, however, of the grave doubts which are entertained as to the actual value of these two descriptions of Japanese coin, the undersigned considers that his Countrymen may fairly claim that all the silver *bu*s and also all the *nibus* in their possession stamped under the arrangement made with the Foreign Representatives in August last should be exchanged at the Mint for new coin as is observed in their Excellencies letter, according to their bullion content, but the *bu*s according to the value described by the Convention of June 25, 1866, and the *nibus* according to the value stated in the above mentioned communication of 21st August 1869.

If the Japanese Government have faithfully kept their international and moral engage

ments no loss can result to them from the adoption of this course, while on the other hand, if debased coin has been issued by them, it is only right that they themselves should bear the loss that such an unfortunate measure entails.

Their Excellencies declare that the Japanese Coins now current shall be accepted from foreigners in payment of duties, but the amount which would be thus returned to the Government every year is so small in comparison with the quantity in circulation the Government having admitted to the Representatives that they have issued fifty millions of *Yos* in value alone — that it would be highly important in the interests of Commerce that it should be known for what internal taxes and duties Japanese subjects will be allowed to pay in these coins at their nominal value, and what amount is therefore likely to reach the Government through their own people.

The Confidence of foreign and native merchants in the intentions of the Government would also be greatly strengthened if the latter would distinctly engage to receive none of the old coins, but to recoin them as they receive them either from foreigners or Japanese.

In presenting to their Excellencies the above observations on those points of their Communication which may be said to concern equally foreigners and Japanese, he begs at the same time to draw their attention to that part of his letter which relates to the bus and stamped rubes now in the possession of his Countrymen and on this point he requests the favor of an early reply. He undesigns avails himself of this opportunity to renew to their Excellencies the assurance of his most distinguished Consideration.

Harry Parkes

His Britannic Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary