

The establishment of this service has been undertaken by New Zealand and New South Wales with a view of carrying out the arrangement proposed in the Treasury minute of the 2nd June, 1873, under which the Imperial Post Office proposes to convey the colonial mails free of charge between London and San Francisco, and to pay to each colony contributing to such a service as that now in question, the outward postage on correspondence addressed to it, less the inland British rate.

F. No. 6A, 1873,
Sub-enclosure 1
in Enclosure 2 in
No. 1.

The formal contract has not yet been signed, but the agreement has been so far determined as to enable the date of the actual commencement of the service to be fixed. This date is, from New Zealand the 15th December, from New South Wales the 20th December, and from San Francisco the 27th January.

I shall feel obliged if his Lordship will be good enough to cause the above information to be communicated to the Imperial Post Office authorities, with a request that, from the commencement of the new service, all correspondence for New Zealand may be sent by way of San Francisco, unless specially directed to be sent by some other route. Correspondence, however, specially directed *viâ* Suez and Melbourne, or *viâ* Singapore and Torres' Straits, should be sent as directed.

With a view to the arrangement of the various details connected with the transmission of mails to and from New Zealand by the new route, it may probably be convenient that I should be placed in direct communication with the Postmaster-General.

I have, &c.,

I. E. FEATHERSTON,

Agent-General.

The Right Hon. R. G. W. Herbert, Downing Street.

Enclosure 2 in No. 6.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, London.

7, Westminster Chambers, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.,

5th November, 1873.

SIR,—

Assuming that official intimations, which have been addressed to Lord Kimberley, of the proposed establishment by the Colonies of New Zealand and New South Wales of a steam mail service between those colonies and San Francisco, will have been communicated to the authorities of the General Post Office, I now beg leave to address you on some matters of detail connected with the transmission of mails by the above service.

The date on which the service will commence is stated in the communications to the Secretary of State above mentioned, as well as the desire of the New Zealand Government that all correspondence for that colony, not specially directed to be sent by any other route, shall be sent by way of San Francisco. Letters, however, specially addressed to be sent *viâ* Suez and Melbourne, or *viâ* Torres' Straits, should be sent by these routes.

With a view of enabling the New Zealand Post Office to collect the proper amounts of postage with which it will be necessary to credit the Imperial Post Office on correspondence from New Zealand sent in transit through the United Kingdom, I shall feel obliged if you will, by the earliest opportunity, forward to the Postmaster-General of New Zealand instructions as to what those amounts should be.

It will also be desirable that information should be transmitted to New Zealand as to the rates which will have to be collected for account of the British Post Office, on correspondence sent from the colony *viâ* San Francisco, for British Columbia, Canada, or other North American Provinces, Mexico, Central and South America, and the West Indies. I shall feel obliged if you will forward to New Zealand the necessary instructions upon this point, as well as upon any others connected with the transmission of mails by the new service, for which, had time permitted, the Post Office authorities of that colony would have applied to you.

You will doubtless be good enough to inform the Post Office of the United States that the mail steamer from New Zealand may be expected at San Francisco in the middle of January, and will leave that place on her return on the 27th, and request them to make such arrangements as will insure the colonial mails being forwarded through the United States territory with the least possible delay.

I have, &c.,

I. E. FEATHERSTON.

The Postmaster-General, General Post Office, London.

Enclosure 3 in No. 6.

Mr. PAGE to the AGENT-GENERAL.

General Post Office, 14th November, 1873.

SIR,—

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th instant, announcing the proposed establishment of a mail packet service between San Francisco, Sydney, and New Zealand, and to acquaint you that the necessary steps will be taken for despatching the mails by the new route at the time appointed.

I have already forwarded to the Postmaster-General of New Zealand a table showing the rates of postage to be accounted for on correspondence forwarded through the United Kingdom to foreign countries and British colonies, and the rates to be accounted for on correspondence for Central and South America, the West Indies, &c., &c., intended to be sent from San Francisco by United States mail packets, and I have informed the United States Post Office of the establishment of the new service, and have requested that such arrangements may be made as will insure the New Zealand and Australian mails being forwarded through the United States territory with the least possible delay.

I observe that it is the wish of the Government of New Zealand that all correspondence from this country, not specially addressed to be sent by any other route, should be forwarded by way of San