

a good opportunity for pressing the subject officially again upon the Treasury, I have sent in the annexed letter to the Post Office. Sir Charles Tupper, High Commissioner for Canada, continues to be in close communication with me, and he entirely concurs in the course I have taken.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Wellington.

F. D. BELL.

Enclosure in No. 2.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, London.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, S.W., 25th July, 1888.

I beg leave to state in writing what I represented to you at the conference you were kind enough to have with me yesterday on the question of the Pacific postal services.

The New Zealand Parliament is now engaged in considering that question, and my Government have telegraphed to me asking whether Her Majesty's Postmaster-General will now decide whether he would continue for five years the existing arrangements for the division of postage and cost of the service *via* San Francisco, if the contract is renewed for that period; also inquiring whether Her Majesty's Government have yet decided to give any assistance to the alternative service proposed *via* Vancouver, and pressing me to obtain a definite answer, as it is urgently necessary for the Parliament to come to a final decision on the subject. I hope, therefore, that Mr. Raikes will allow me to press once more on his consideration the question I have already brought before him.

It will be in your recollection that in my letter to you of the 17th February I stated that at the close of last New Zealand session the House of Representatives had directed definite proposals for a Pacific service to be laid before them when they reassembled; and that the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury then expressed the hope that they would soon be in a position to decide upon a permanent system of apportionment of postage after November, 1889.

The peculiar conditions which have hitherto governed any Pacific service to Australasia are so clear, and it is so certain that they will continue to govern it, that I may be permitted to urge them on the consideration of the Postmaster-General: (1.) It was always quite certain that if the Imperial Government and the Governments of Australia made a ten years' contract for the Brindisi service no Pacific service (whether by San Francisco or Vancouver) would exist except on the condition of the greater part of the Australasian subsidy being paid by New Zealand. (2.) It was equally certain that New Zealand would never subsidise any service at all which did not make the colony the "first port of call" coming from America, and the last returning. (3.) No Pacific service would be established by New Zealand if any serious change was made in the existing apportionment of postage between the colony and the Imperial Government. (4.) If a Pacific service was not renewed all the New Zealand mails, except the small proportion by Brindisi, would have to go by the direct ocean-lines *via* Plymouth. (5.) Once a contract was made with the shipping companies for a fortnightly direct service, it would not be unmade afterwards. (6.) In that case there would be no Pacific service, and the Vancouver and San Francisco schemes would both come to an end.

Now, the question still is whether Her Majesty's Government does or does not wish to keep the Vancouver scheme open. If not, then I need not trouble the Postmaster-General any more. But if Imperial reasons point to the ultimate establishment of a Vancouver service, the one way to help it on is for their Lordships to arrange in concert with New Zealand for the temporary continuance of existing arrangements, until the Vancouver question is ripe, and the time comes when permanent arrangements must be made.

Once more, therefore, I entreat that this may be settled now. It is certain that there will be no trouble about apportionment if ever the Vancouver service is established; and if a time shall come when the national interests involved make the Imperial Government willing to take a part with Canada, New Zealand, and New South Wales in a Vancouver contract, that step will have been cheaply purchased by enabling New Zealand to renew the San Francisco contract now.

I am, &c.,

The Secretary, General Post Office, St. Martin's-le-Grand.

F. D. BELL.

No. 3.

Mr. R. J. CREIGHTON to the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

San Francisco, 18th August, 1888.

WASHINGTON offers over forty thousand. Recommend temporary acceptance.
Postal, Wellington.

CREIGHTON.

No. 4.

The Hon. Sir H. A. ATKINSON to Mr. CREIGHTON, San Francisco.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 24th August, 1888.

ACCEPT up to November, 'eighty-nine.
Mr. Creighton, San Francisco.

ATKINSON.