

the Isthmus of Darien, near Panama, then the respective times to be revised, and such shorter times substituted as may be agreed upon by the Postmaster-General and the Contractors.

4. The Contractors to be at liberty to call at such ports *en route* as the Postmaster-General may approve of.

5. The service to be performed by first-class screw steam-vessels, fully equal to Class 100 A1, Lloyd's Register, and of not less than 4,000 gross registered tonnage, having spar decks and large capacity for passengers and cargo, and ample ventilation for passing through tropical latitudes.

6. The vessels to be fitted with refrigerating-chambers for frozen meat, and also approved chilled chambers for fruit, dairy-produce, &c.

7. The Postmaster-General to have full power to inspect the vessels employed, their officers and crew, and to suspend the use of any vessel which may not be considered satisfactory, or to prevent the employment of any officer, engineer, or crew appearing to him to be ineligible.

8. The mails to be conveyed will be all such mails as the Postmaster-General may from time to time require the Contractors to carry to and from New Zealand and Plymouth and other approved ports of call.

9. If any vessel shall not be at the port of departure from time to time in due time, and ready to perform the service, a sum of £250, and a further sum of £50 per day, is to be paid by the Contractors to, or may be deducted by, the Postmaster-General as liquidated and ascertained damages. But the Postmaster-General may remit or reduce these sums if satisfied that the default shall have arisen from causes over which the Contractors have no control.

10. No bonus will be paid for the delivery of the mails within the times stated in clause 3. A penalty of £4 an hour will be deducted for late delivery at New Zealand and Plymouth.

11. The Postmaster-General to have the power to detain the vessels at the port of despatch in New Zealand and at Plymouth for twenty-four hours free of charge. For any further detention, demurrage at the rate of £5 an hour to be paid the Contractors.

12. The vessels must be provided with safe and convenient places of deposit for the mails, rendered vermin-proof, and with locks, keys, and secure fastenings.

13. The Contractors, if required, to provide the necessary lights and accommodation for sorting and making up mails on board the vessels, with a separate and convenient room on the spar deck for the purpose, and to render any assistance which may be needed for conveying the mails between the mail-room and the sorting-room, &c.

14. Suitable first-class accommodation for a Mail Officer or Agent, with a properly-fitted state-room or cabin for his exclusive use, to be provided on board the vessels, and such officers or agents to be victualled by the Contractors as chief-cabin passengers, without charge, and during the time a vessel may stay at any port *en route*, but not at the terminal ports, are to be allowed to remain on board and are to be victualled by the Contractors.

15. The Contractors will not be required to pay any light, pilotage, tonnage, or harbour dues in respect of the first port of arrival in New Zealand.

16. The Contractors to bind themselves to pay to the Postmaster-General the sum of £20,000 by way of liquidated damages in case they shall fail to commence the service, or, having commenced it, shall refuse or neglect to carry on the same.

17. The Contractors shall, within thirty days after notification in writing of the acceptance of the tender, execute a contract under seal with the Postmaster-General, embodying the tender and these conditions, and such other terms, conditions, and stipulations as may be necessary to secure the due performance of the contract; and, if required, enter, with two sureties, to be approved by the Postmaster-General, into a joint and several bond in the sum of £20,000.

18. Tenders are to be made only on the accompanying printed form, and attached to these particulars and conditions, and are to be delivered at the General Post Office, Wellington, on or before Friday, the 31st May, 1889, and indorsed, "Tender for Direct Mail-service, New Zealand and Plymouth," and addressed to the Postmaster-General, New Zealand.

For the guidance of tenderers only, but not by way of guarantee, the following particulars are given for 1887 of the correspondence received and despatched by—

|                  |     |     |     |     |     | Letters. | Books and<br>Packets. | Newspapers. |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------|-----------------------|-------------|
|                  |     |     |     |     |     | Lb.      | Lb.                   | Lb.         |
| Direct steamers— |     |     |     |     |     |          |                       |             |
| Despatched       | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 4,138    | 3,791                 | 22,836      |
| Received         | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 8,102    | 35,677                | 147,834     |
| San Francisco—   |     |     |     |     |     |          |                       |             |
| Despatched       | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 10,953   | 14,819                | 91,276      |
| Received         | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 7,965    | 41,692                | 139,184     |
| Shaw-Savill—     |     |     |     |     |     |          |                       |             |
| Despatched       | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 350      | 213                   | 876         |
| Received         | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 219      | 1,801                 | 3,001       |
|                  |     |     |     |     |     | 31,727   | 97,993                | 405,007     |

H. A. ATKINSON, Postmaster-General.

General Post Office, Wellington, New Zealand 23rd January, 1889.