

prepared to enter into a contract for a regular fortnightly service between this colony and Plymouth, on the terms and conditions of the existing contract. The ten steamers above-named will be available to perform this service.

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

ISAAC GIBBS, Secretary.

[NOTE.—Existing Contract Conditions: Mails to be delivered in forty-two days from New Zealand to Plymouth, and forty-five days from Plymouth to New Zealand. £5 per hour bonus for early delivery and £4 penalty per hour for late arrival. Exemption from payment of light and harbour dues at the first port of arrival in the colony; and the following rates of payment for the conveyance of the mails: Letters, 12s. per pound; books, 1s. per pound; and newspapers 6d. per pound.]

No. 21.

Mr. GRAY to the SECRETARY, New Zealand Shipping Company (Limited), Christchurch.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 20th June, 1889.

I have the honour, by direction of the Postmaster-General, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 31st ultimo, submitting, by instruction of your Board of Directors, proposals under which your company, in conjunction with the Shaw-Savill and Albion Company, is prepared to enter into a contract for the performance of a four-weekly, or fortnightly, steam-service for the conveyance of mails between the colony and Plymouth, for three years from December next.

I am to point out that your proposals do not comply with the conditions under which the department invited tenders for the continuance of the Direct mail-service. The offer will, however, be laid before Parliament for consideration.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY, Secretary.

The Secretary, New Zealand Shipping Company (Limited), Christchurch.

No. 22.

The Hon. Sir H. A. ATKINSON to the AGENT-GENERAL, London.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 16th March, 1889.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th December last on the subject of the proposed mail-service between Vancouver and Australasia.

I have, &c.,

H. A. ATKINSON, Postmaster-General.

Sir F. D. Bell, K.C.M.G., C.B., Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

No. 23.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 31st January, 1889.

With reference to the question of a steam service between Vancouver and Australasia, I have thought it best not to send yet the formal letter to the Colonial Office to which I alluded in my letter of the 12th December, as I was privately aware of the Canadian Government being likely to make some statement to the Dominion Parliament on the subject. This has now been done in the Governor-General's opening Speech on the 31st instant; but the High Commissioner has not yet received the text of the speech: when it comes to him I shall address Lord Knutsford. But my impression has been strengthened—especially after recent speeches by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on matters certain to affect largely his Budget of the present year—that he will not be willing to entertain the question of an Imperial money-subsidy to a Vancouver service; and, at any rate, I feel sure he will not do so until the Australasian Governments have themselves decided how far they would unite with Canada in establishing it.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Wellington.

F. D. BELL.

No. 24.

The Hon. Sir H. A. ATKINSON to the AGENT-GENERAL, London.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 26th March, 1889.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 31st January last, in continuation of the correspondence on the question of a steam-service between Vancouver and Australasia. I note that at that date you were awaiting a suitable opportunity to address the Secretary of State.

I have, &c.,

H. A. ATKINSON, Postmaster-General.

Sir F. D. Bell, K.C.M.G., C.B., Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

No. 25.

The Hon. Sir H. A. ATKINSON to the AGENT-GENERAL, London.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 15th May, 1889.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th March last in reference to tenders for a direct mail-service and the present state of affairs relating to a Pacific service *via* Vancouver.