

Government declined to inaugurate a similar service on the English packets. The effect of this refusal, so far as the colonies are concerned, is to greatly impair the efficiency of the Californian line as a mail-route between Australia, New Zealand, and England. On the Home trip there is no official obstacle to the prompt transmission of the colonial mail to London.

I also wrote to you informally by the "Monowai" on the subject of railroad charges, and I now desire to invite your serious consideration of it, because the solution of the difficulty rests exclusively with the New Zealand and Australian Governments, and also because the special transit charges in America press heavily and so injuriously upon the San Francisco mail-service.

I was informed at Washington that all the great powers represented at the Postal Conference at Vienna desired to abolish special transit charges, but that the Australian delegates objected and made their retention a condition of joining the Postal Union. Their opposition prevailed; and now the question cannot be brought up again for five years, unless at the request of the new members who did not participate in the former vote. If the special transit charges had been abolished, the uniform rate adopted by the Postal Union would apply to the Australian mail in transit across the United States. It would be useless to attempt to influence Congress to abolish those charges, in view of the state of facts I have presented, as they would be reported to the Committees to which the question might be referred. I would suggest, therefore, that it would be advisable to confer upon this point with the Australian Governments, with a view to a joint request to the other members of the Postal Union to reconsider the vote refusing to abolish special transit charges, and that such motion should prevail. The question may be taken up by consent in this way and satisfactorily settled; otherwise the San Francisco service will be heavily and unnecessarily handicapped for years to come.

This action appears to me to be all the more necessary in view of the projected fortnightly service, which would shorten the time between England and the colonies, and therefore increase the use of the Californian mail-route. This would proportionately increase the special transit charges between San Francisco and New York, a result which the reduced postage rates may make exceedingly onerous.

I have, &c.,

W. Gray, Esq., Secretary, Post Office, Wellington.

ROBT. J. CREIGHTON.

No. 11A.

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

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 10th September, 1891.

I have the honour to inform you that it has been reported to this office that some improvement is needed in the delivery of the colonial mails, from the steamers arriving in New York, to the United States Postal authorities. It is alleged that, owing to the fact that the colonial mails are not separated from those for the United States, delays frequently occur in the transfer of the mails from the steamer to the trains for San Francisco. Were the colonial mails kept distinct from those for the United States it would be possible for the New York Post Office to deliver them immediately to the train, frequently saving twelve hours, and consequent delay of the steamer at San Francisco. I should therefore be glad if you can make any arrangement whereby the transfer of the colonial mails from the steamer to the New York Post Office, and thence to the railway train, can be effected, so as to prevent the delays which now take place.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY,

The Secretary, General Post Office, London.

For the Postmaster-General.

No. 12.

MAIL-SERVICE RESOLUTIONS (agreed to by the House of Representatives, on Tuesday, 15th September, 1891).

Resolved—1. That, in the opinion of this House, a two-weekly mail-service should be maintained between New Zealand and Great Britain.

2. That, in the event of the Imperial Post Office agreeing to extend the present agreement for the apportionment of the cost of the San Francisco and Direct mail-services between that office and the colony, or any favourable variation thereof, this House empowers the Government to arrange with the present contractors for the renewal of the San Francisco and Direct services for a period not exceeding three years, on the following conditions:—

- (a.) That the basis of payment shall be a rate of 11s. per pound on the net weight of the letters conveyed (excluding those from America by the San Francisco service).
- (b.) That all payments or contributions from Great Britain and other countries shall be receivable by the contractors.
- (c.) That the colony's direct liability to be for payment of its outward letters only.
- (d.) That at least one New Zealand steamer in three shall be employed in the San Francisco service.
- (e.) That the time between San Francisco and New Zealand shall not exceed twenty days; the port of call in the colony to be Auckland or Wellington, at the option of the contractors.
- (f.) That the time between New Zealand and Plymouth shall not exceed forty-two days homeward, and forty-five days outward, the contractors to be at liberty to arrive at and depart from any New Zealand port.
- (g.) No bonus to be paid for early arrival, and penalties at the rate of £4 an hour to be enforced only when late delivery exceeds forty-eight hours.