

I assume that the proposal is to renew the present four-weekly service; and upon that assumption I have requested the agents here to prepare a time-table for the coming year, copy of which I herewith enclose for your information and approval.

I have also the honour to enclose copy of a letter from the Superintendent of Foreign Mails, Mr. Brooks, who represented the United States Postal Department at the Vienna Congress, which covers two of the points in the Postmaster-General's cable. From this communication you will learn that the action of the Australian delegates went very much further than insistence upon maintaining maritime-transit charges. At least, this was the understanding upon which the Congress acted, with the result that I fear nothing can be accomplished for the present in the reduction of the overland-transit charges in this country. This point is brought out very clearly in Mr. Brooks's letter to me. I have, however, written to him upon the subject, copy herewith enclosed.

Upon receiving the Postmaster-General's cable I at once took steps to have the fact of your continuance of the Australian mail-service telegraphed to the newspapers in all Eastern cities, and made the announcement in the local Press, whose comments in three cases I enclose.

I regret that, owing to the delay in the arrival of the "Mariposa" until Saturday, the mail failed to connect with the "Majestic," sailing from New York on the Wednesday following. The Hamburg American Packet Company's fast steamship "Furst Bismarck," however, was billed to sail from New York on Thursday, the 10th instant, at 10 a.m., and if the sailing could be postponed two hours the mail, being on time at New York, could be despatched by her and delivered at Southampton on the same day the "Majestic's" mail would reach London, thereby avoiding delay in transit.

Accordingly, application was made to the local agents of the Hamburg line, who wired to New York my request, and received a reply by telegraph that the steamer would be held two hours to enable the Australian mail to be forwarded by her. Unfortunately, the mail did not reach New York until 1 o'clock p.m., and the detention of the steamer was unavailing, as she had to sail not later than noon to save the tide on the bar. I had telegraphed to the New York Postmaster to give prompt despatch, and received a despatch from him announcing the failure of the arrangement to ship the mail by the "Furst Bismarck."

I enclose copies of despatches and correspondence, from which you will note that the Hamburg American Packet Company went to considerable trouble and expense to oblige the New Zealand Post Office Department. This action of a foreign company is in marked contrast with the refusal, a few months ago, of the English company, which is paid for carrying the mail, to make a detention of a few hours in the sailing of their ship for a similar purpose.

I have taken upon myself to thank the American Hamburg Company, and will transmit to the manager any more formal acknowledgment you may please to make.

I have, &c.,

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

ROBT. J. CREIGHTON.

Enclosure 1 in No. 29.

The SUPERINTENDENT of FOREIGN MAILS, Washington, to Mr. CREIGHTON, San Francisco.

DEAR SIR,—

Washington, D.C., 8th September, 1891.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 18th ultimo, enclosing for the information of this department a copy of your letter of the preceding day to the Secretary of the New Zealand Post Office, relative to the measures you have adopted for expediting the forwarding from San Francisco of the closed mails from the Australasian Colonies for Great Britain, and the measures you suggest to be taken by the colonies for the rapid delivery at New York of the closed mails from Great Britain for the Australasian Colonies.

In reply, I have to inform you that your letters have been read with interest, and that this department will continue, for the future, as it has done in the past, to do everything practicable to expedite the transfer from the steamers, and the forwarding by the first outgoing train of the British closed mails for the colonies arriving at New York.

Referring to your remarks relative to the disadvantage sustained by the United States transcontinental mail-service on account of the high rates charged for the transit of closed mails between San Francisco and New York, I have to inform you that the delegates from the United States to the Postal Congress of Vienna did not advocate only the abolition of the rates in question, but were instructed to secure, if possible, the abolition of all transit rates, so that every country of the Postal Union should be required to transport the closed mails of every other country of the Union free of charge; or, failing to accomplish that end, to advocate the reduction of all transit rates. But, as the maintenance of the present rates was made a condition precedent to the entrance of the Australasian Colonies to the Union, all measures looking to the reduction or abolition of the transit rates were, by unanimous consent, abandoned, in order to accomplish the greater object of securing the adhesion of the colonies to the Union.

It may be well to add that, until there is a reduction of the Postal Union transit rates generally, this department could not consent to reduce the rates chargeable for the transcontinental service between New York and San Francisco, a recent and very careful investigation of the actual cost of that service having shown that the receipts barely cover the expense of transporting the mails.

I am, &c.,

N. M. BROOKS,

Superintendent of Foreign Mails.

Robert J. Creighton, Esq.

Agent of the New Zealand Government, San Francisco, California.