

No. 62.

The Hon. J. G. WARD to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Washington.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 27th November, 1891.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th ultimo, notifying, in reply to mine of the 8th September, that it will be impossible to employ New Zealand steamers in the fast fortnightly service which you propose to provide between the United States and the Australasian Colonies, for reasons which you quote from the Act of the 3rd March, 1891, fully set forth in the pamphlet which accompanied the letter of the Superintendent of Foreign Mails of the 17th September.

I very much regret to learn that New Zealand steamers will be debarred from running at all under the provisions of the Act in question, under which you had invited tenders for the fortnightly service. Nevertheless, I shall be very glad to hear that you have been able to arrange for establishing a fast fortnightly service in the near future. But in order that such a line should be fully used for the transport of mails exchanged between Great Britain and New Zealand, there would need to be a reduction in the United States territorial transit charges for closed mails. You have already moved in the matter, and I venture to urge you to make further representations to Congress, and trust to hear that you have succeeded in obtaining power to reduce the territorial transit charges.

I have, &c.,

J. G. WARD,

Postmaster-General.

The Postmaster-General, &c., Washington, D.C.

No. 63.

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

(Telegram.)

London, 28th November, 1891.

IMPERIAL Post Office decides abolish system specially-addressed letters. Sending outward correspondence indifferently Federal Frisco routes, according as mail timed reach colony first. Other points under consideration.

No. 64.

The ACTING AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the PREMIER, Wellington.

SIR,—

13, Victoria Street, London, S.W., 16th October, 1891.

I beg to transmit copies of cablegrams and correspondence relating to the mail-services, in continuation of those enclosed with my letter of the 9th instant (*vide* No. 156).

I regret that I am still unable to advise you of the decision of Her Majesty's Government in respect to the apportionments. I addressed a note yesterday to the Treasury, again asking when a decision may be expected, and urging the importance of a speedy reply.

I may explain that, in pointing out, as I did in the letter of the 8th instant, which I addressed to the General Post Office, that the San Francisco mail-contract terminated with the mail which left London on the 3rd instant, I was guided—first, by the information contained in your letter of the 20th May last (not published); and, secondly, by the revised time-tables, dated 20th March last, received at this office from the Postmaster-General at Wellington. I take the opportunity of enclosing herewith copy of Sir F. D. Bell's letter of the 9th July, which is referred to in the General Post Office letter of the 9th instant.

I may add that the report of the New Zealand Post and Telegraph Department, and the papers relating to the ocean mail-services, laid before Parliament at its second session of this year, were not available, the first copies having only reached this office by the mail delivered this day.

I have, &c.,

WALTER KENNAWAY.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

Enclosure 1 in No. 64.

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

SIR,—

General Post Office, 9th October, 1891.

I hasten to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th instant, pressing for an answer to the letter addressed to this department by Sir Francis Bell on the 7th August last, inquiring whether Her Majesty's Government would be prepared to continue for a further period of three years the same apportionments as were in force last year in respect of the mails exchanged between this country and New Zealand by the San Francisco route, and by the direct route *via* Plymouth, or, if not, what other apportionments would be more acceptable.

In reply, I am directed by the Postmaster-General to inform you that this question is still under the consideration of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, but that a letter shall at once be addressed to their Lordships asking for an early decision.

I am to add that it has been observed with some surprise that you mention the 3rd instant as to the date on which the last despatch of mails to New Zealand *via* San Francisco has been fixed to take place, as it was understood here that the present contract, which, according to a letter from Sir Francis Bell, dated the 9th July last (not published), commenced on the 1st November, 1890, would terminate with a despatch from this country on the 31st October, 1891, and this date has, in fact, been included in a notice which has been issued to the public (copy enclosed).