

ing of your Chamber, affirming that the Bluff should be made the first port of call under any new contract for the Direct service.

The resolution has been duly considered by the Postmaster-General, who regrets that he is unable to hold out a hope that the desire of the Chamber can be carried into effect, as he considers it would be impracticable to bind the contractors to any one port. The determination of the first or any port of call has hitherto been left to the contractors; and the subsidy is now so small that the Postmaster-General does not think that negotiations on his part for an alteration of the contract-conditions in this respect would be successful. In the present contract the Bluff is put in the same position as Port Chalmers, Lyttelton, Wellington, and Auckland as a port of call; and the Chamber might directly approach the contracting company, and endeavour to prevail on the directors to favourably consider the landing of the inward mails at the Bluff.

The Secretary, Chamber of Commerce, Invercargill.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY, Secretary.

No. 140.

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

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 9th September, 1891.

CAN you now reply definitely *re* renewal Direct service contract? Question ocean services to be considered by House of Representatives on Monday. Important that Postmaster-General should learn decision your company by Friday next.

No. 141.

The SECRETARY, New Zealand Shipping Company (Limited), to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

Christchurch, 9th September, 1891.

HAVE cabled our London office that question of mail-services will be submitted to Parliament on 14th instant, and asked them to cable definite reply immediately. We will pass on the reply as soon as received.

No. 142.

The ACTING SECRETARY, New Zealand Shipping Company (Limited), to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

Christchurch, 12th September, 1891.

OUR London office cables that we cannot entertain proposals *re* mail-service except at a considerable reduction in speed. The amount offered is so small that our time in London is more valuable.

No. 143.

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

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 16th September, 1891.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Bennett's telegram of the 12th instant, notifying receipt of advices from London that your company cannot entertain the proposals of the Government for renewal of the Direct mail-service for three years, except at a considerable reduction in speed.

The Postmaster-General has read the telegram, and I am to express his regret at the decision of your company. I am also to refer you to the resolution (*vide* No. 12) respecting ocean mail-services (copy herewith) submitted to and passed by the House of Representatives yesterday.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY, Secretary.

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

No. 144.

The SECRETARY, New Zealand Shipping Company (Limited), to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

Christchurch, 30th September, 1891.

WOULD Postmaster-General agree make contract with us for carriage of mails from London only.

No. 145.

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

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 2nd October, 1891.

POSTMASTER-GENERAL requests me to say that, as your inquiry relates to mails from London only, he could not contract. That is a matter for London Post Office authorities, to whom he will refer matter. I am also to ask whether Postmaster-General is to conclude that yourselves and Shaw-Savill will not renew for carriage of mails both ways on terms fixed by House of Representatives.