

The Postmaster-General awaits the decision of their Lordships on this subject.

In the meantime, it rested with the Postmaster-General to consider that part of your letter of the 6th instant which had relation to the routes proposed to be used for the despatch of mails from this country to New Zealand under the altered circumstances of the colonial service.

You stated that the Government of New Zealand proposed to avail themselves of the mail-service between Australia and the United Kingdom *via* Suez, and to transmit the Homeward mails by that route once in every four weeks, so as to secure, with the San Francisco service, a fortnightly mail between the two countries. At the same time you invited this department to adopt a similar course as regards the outward mails, with the understanding, however, "that only specially-addressed letters, &c., are to be transmitted by the intervening and other services."

To this last-mentioned arrangement the Postmaster-General regrets that he is unable to consent. He desires me to remark that when the fortnightly service to and from New Zealand was performed by two colonial lines, independent of the Imperial lines from Brindisi and Naples, it was possible to defend the practice of requiring a special address for letters meant to go *via* Suez; but that when the Suez route is itself one of those by which the regular service is performed, the public in this country would certainly not tolerate a rule requiring them to specially superscribe their letters in one week and not in another for one and the same line.

Governed by these considerations, it is the Postmaster-General's intention to send the outward correspondence to New Zealand indifferently by the eastern and western routes, according as the mail by one or the other is timed to reach the colony first, and a notice to this effect has been issued to the public, copies of which are enclosed.

According to the views of this department, it will be advantageous to send correspondence for all parts of New Zealand *via* Italy in the week immediately following the despatch of the mail *via* San Francisco, and in the second and third weeks following that despatch to send the mails for Invercargill, Christchurch, and Wellington only *via* Italy, retaining the correspondence comprised in the mails for Auckland for despatch *via* San Francisco.

In the week fixed for the despatch of the mail *via* San Francisco, it will be advantageous to send all correspondence by that route.

These rules will be acted upon for the present; but, should it occur to the Postal authorities in New Zealand that better arrangements can be made in the interests of the public, any suggestion that may be made on the subject shall receive prompt consideration.

I may add that a letter in this sense has already been addressed to the Postmaster-General of New Zealand.

Walter Kennaway, Esq., C.M.G.

I am, &c.,

S. A. BLACKWOOD.

No. 159.

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

SIR,—

General Post Office, London, 26th November, 1891.

The Postmaster-General has learned through the Acting Agent-General for New Zealand in London that the Government of New Zealand have decided not to renew the contract for the conveyance of mails between the colony and the United Kingdom by the all-sea route *via* Plymouth, but that they have made arrangements for continuing the four-weekly service by the route of San Francisco.

In communicating this information, Mr. Kennaway states that his Government propose to avail themselves of the mail-service between Australia and the United Kingdom *via* Suez, and to transmit the Homeward mails by that route once in every four weeks, so as to secure with the San Francisco service a fortnightly mail between the two countries. He at the same time invites this department to adopt a similar course as regards the outward mails, with the understanding, however, "that only specially-addressed letters, &c., are to be transmitted by the intervening and other services."

To this last-mentioned arrangement the Postmaster-General regrets that he is unable to consent. He desires me to remark that when the fortnightly service to and from New Zealand was performed by two lines, independent of the Imperial lines from Brindisi and Naples, it was possible to defend the practice of requiring a special address for letters meant to go *via* Suez, but that when the Suez route is itself one of those by which the regular service is performed, the public in this country would certainly not tolerate a rule requiring them to specially superscribe their letters in one week and not in another for one and the same line.

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In the week fixed for the despatch of the mail *via* San Francisco it will be advantageous to send all correspondence by that route.

These rules will be acted upon for the present, but should it occur to you that any better arrangements can be made in the interests of the public, any suggestion that you may make on the subject shall receive prompt consideration.

I am, &c.,

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Wellington.

S. A. BLACKWOOD.