

by the House of Representatives providing that not less than the current rate of wages ruling in New South Wales for steamboat seamen should be paid by the contractors. The full text of the resolutions passed on the 13th December, 1897, is as follows:—

*San Francisco Mail-service.*

*Resolved*,—1. That this House authorises the Government to extend the San Francisco mail-service for twelve months from the 31st March, 1898.

2. That the basis of payment for the conveyance of mails from New Zealand to San Francisco shall be at the rate of 10s. 5d. per pound for letters, 1s. per pound for books, packets, &c., and 6d. per pound for newspapers, with a guaranteed minimum payment of £7,500.

3. That the port of call in the colony shall be Auckland.

4. That the time between San Francisco and Auckland shall not exceed nineteen days.

5. That no bonus shall 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.

6. That at least one New-Zealand-owned steamer shall be employed in the service.

7. That the steamers to be employed shall be of not less than 3,000 gross registered tonnage.

8. That all payments or contributions from Great Britain and other countries shall be receivable by the contractors.

9. That the passenger rates and rates for freight shall be mutually agreed upon, and be fixed and embodied in the contract.

10. That the provisions of the existing agreement, where not at variance with these conditions, shall apply to any new contract made under this authority.

11. That a clause be embodied in the contract providing that not less than the current rate of wages ruling in New South Wales for steamboat seamen shall be paid by the contractor.

The terms under which the Vancouver service was established are, with the exception of the longer time allowed for the voyage, practically identical with those of the San Francisco renewal. The following are the resolutions agreed to by the House of Representatives:—

*Vancouver Mail-service.*

*Resolved*,—1. That this House also empowers the Government to establish a four-weekly mail-service between New Zealand and Vancouver, British Columbia, by way of Fiji and Honolulu, from the 1st December, 1897, to the 31st March, 1899.

2. Payment for the conveyance of mails from New Zealand to Vancouver to be at the rate of 10s. 5d. per pound for letters, 1s. per pound for books, packets, &c., and 6d. per pound for newspapers, with a guaranteed minimum payment at the rate of £7,500 per annum.

3. That the port of call in New Zealand shall be Wellington.

4. The steamers to be employed to be of not less than 3,300 gross registered tonnage; and the time between Wellington and Vancouver not to exceed twenty-one and one-half days.

5. No bonus to be paid for early arrival. A penalty at the rate of £4 an hour to be enforced when the late delivery of the mails exceeds forty-eight hours.

6. All payments or contributions from other countries to be receivable by the contractors.

7. The passenger accommodation to be of the best description, and suitable for the voyage through tropical latitudes.

8. The contractors to convey all mails tendered at Wellington and Vancouver by or on behalf of the Postmaster-General, and to provide sufficient and secure accommodation for the same.

9. The contractors also to provide suitable accommodation and lighting for the purpose of sorting mails on board the contract vessels. First-class accommodation, as required, to be provided for a mail-agent and assistant without charge.

10. The rates for passengers and cargo to be mutually agreed upon and embodied in the contract, the terms of which, where not inapplicable, to be similar to those set out in the provisional agreement entered into between the Hon. J. G. Ward and Mr. James Huddart, at London, on the 19th April, 1895 (*vide* F.—9, 1895).

11. That a clause be embodied in the contract providing that not less than the current rate of wages ruling in New South Wales for steamboat seamen shall be paid by the contractor.

The short length of time for which the two new contracts were to be entered into is mainly the result of a disinclination on the part of Government to extend the San Francisco service for a longer term until it could be ascertained whether the United States would continue the subsidy now being paid the contractors. Moreover, in view of the desire that both services should terminate together, and of the expiry of the New South Wales contract with the Canadian-Australian Royal Mail Steamship Company in May, 1899, it was considered inadvisable to enter into contracts for a period extending beyond the 31st March next.

The first voyage of the accelerated San Francisco service commenced on the 20th April last from San Francisco, and the 16th April from Auckland; and the first subsidised voyage of the Vancouver steamers commenced on the 11th December, 1897, from Wellington, and the 14th December from Vancouver. The time-table under which the steamers of both lines run is arranged so that there will, as nearly as possible, be a fortnightly despatch from New Zealand and London. Mails leave Wellington every alternate Thursday, and are due in London every alternate Wednesday, occupying, from Wellington, thirty-four days. The mails for New Zealand leave London *via* San Francisco on the Saturday following the arrival of the Vancouver mail, and those *via* Vancouver on the Saturday following the arrival of the mail *via* San Francisco. Owing to the headquarters of the Canadian-Australian Royal Mail Steamship Company's line of steamers being in Sydney, the absence of the required docking and repairing facilities at Vancouver, and the necessity for providing for connection at New York with the swiftest vessels running to Great Britain,