

UNITED KINGDOM.—EXTRACT from “Abstract of Contracts or Agreements for the Conveyance of Home Mails by Sea.”

Line of Communication.	How often.	Number and Character of Vessels.	Contractors.	Contract or Agreement.			Payment.	Contract Time.	Deduction for Overtime.	Penalty for general Non-performance.	Remarks.
				Date of Contract.	Terminable.	Service commenced.					
Holyhead and Kingston.	Twice a day.	Four mail packets specially built and maintained for the service.	City of Dublin Steam-packet Company.	1st July, 1895.	31st March, 1917, or on twelve months' notice after 31st March, 1916.	1st April, 1897.	£100,000 to 31st March, 1917. £80,000 after that date.	Outward journey (including transfer on both sides of the Channel), 3 hr. 37 min. (Distance, sixty-three nautical miles.) Inward journey (including transfer), 3 hr. 32 min.	£1 14s. per minute.	If on any occasion vessel is not ready, penalty of £100, and £10 per hour for every hour beyond stipulated time before vessel starts.	The payment is subject to a reduction of £2,000 in respect of the receipts from passenger traffic. It includes payment for parcel-services.

W. GRAY.

Mr. T. RONAYNE, General Manager of the Government Railways, sworn and re-examined.

36. *The Chairman.*] You were requested to prepare a skeleton time-table showing how it would be possible to expedite the railway and steamship service throughout the colony. Is the plan [produced by the witness] prepared with that object?—Yes, Sir; that plan shows various proposals, which I shall be able to explain. One specially deals with the short services.

The plan was divided into four sections as follow: No. 1, present service, showing through connection between Invercargill and stations north (including Lawrence Branch) by train and steamer to Auckland, giving times, days, &c.; No. 2, showing through connection between Auckland and Southland by a four-days service by rail and steamer after 1st December, 1898, the times of trains being as at present; No. 3, alternative, through train and steamer service between Auckland and Southland, four days per week between Wellington and Auckland, departure time of express from Dunedin to Christchurch altered to 8.30 a.m., steamer at Lyttelton to connect with the express and to leave Lyttelton for Wellington at 7.45 p.m., arrive Wellington 6.45 a.m., north train to leave Wellington 8.0 a.m. after arrival of steamer; No. 4, alternative service, identical with No. 3, except that the train from Wellington to New Plymouth would run on four consecutive days instead of running on alternate days.

Upon these diagrams Mr. Ronayne made the following remarks:—

PROPOSED IMPROVED TRAIN- AND STEAMER-SERVICES BETWEEN AUCKLAND AND INVERCARGILL.

No. 1 (*Present Service*).

Northward Running.—This enables mails and passengers from Southland for Oamaru and north thereof to leave Invercargill at 4.15 p.m. daily, arrive Clinton 9.5 p.m., stay for night; resume journey north at 6.5 a.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, and reach Lyttelton at 9.40 p.m. on those days, connecting with steamer leaving Lyttelton for Wellington at 10 p.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. The time taken to do the journey to Wellington under existing arrangements is as follows: From Invercargill, forty-three hours, including nine hours' rest at Clinton; from Clinton and Lawrence, twenty-nine hours; from Dunedin, twenty-four hours; and such journeys can be made tri-weekly—namely, by leaving Invercargill on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, at 4.15 p.m., and Clinton, Lawrence, and Dunedin, on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, at 6.5 a.m., 6.25 a.m., and 11 a.m. respectively. The 6.5 a.m. train from Clinton connects with the Lawrence branch train at Milton, and takes on passengers and mails from Central Otago (*via* Lawrence) to Dunedin, landing them at the latter place at 10.50 a.m. in time to go forward by north express to Lyttelton at 11 a.m.

Passengers from stations south of Clinton, who desire to go through to Auckland overland, require to leave by Monday morning's train, and those from Clinton and stations north must leave by Tuesday morning's train, both reaching Wellington on Wednesday, and Auckland about midday on Saturday following.

The time taken on this journey could be reduced by twenty-four hours if the Union Steamship Company's steamer connected at Lyttelton with the express train from Dunedin on Wednesday