

Zealand would leave Auckland two days later; and, in reference thereto, it is satisfactory to note that the time taken in the transmission of the mails to London has thus been considerably reduced. A similar acceleration has also taken place as regards the outward mails to New Zealand.

As at present arranged, all letters posted in London prior to the despatch of the present four-weekly mail *via* San Francisco are forwarded by that route, and it is therefore assumed that a similar arrangement would be carried into effect in case a fortnightly mail is established, so that all letters, &c., for New Zealand, unless specially superscribed to go by another route, would be forwarded *via* San Francisco.

The Agent-General has been desired by his Government, in view of the near approach of the session of the New Zealand Parliament, to request the favour of an early reply as regards the amount of support which the Imperial Government would be prepared to give in aid of a fortnightly service.

I am, &c.,

The Secretary, General Post Office, E.C.

WALTER KENNAWAY.

Enclosure 2 in No. 1.

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

SIR,—

General Post Office, London, 17th May, 1899.

I am directed by the Postmaster-General to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th instant, stating that a proposal for the establishment of a fortnightly mail-service between New Zealand and the United Kingdom *via* San Francisco is likely to be brought under the consideration of the colonial Parliament during its approaching session, and inquiring what support would be given by the Imperial Government to such a fortnightly service.

In reply, I am to inform you that the Postmaster-General does not think Her Majesty's Government, having provided a regular weekly service to Australasia *via* Suez, has any reason to be anxious for a duplication of the mail-service between the colony and the Mother-country *via* San Francisco. He cannot, therefore, hold out any hope of direct support for such duplication from Imperial funds; but if, in the interests of the colony, a fortnightly instead of a monthly service were established by that route, it might be considered to what extent the proposed additional service could be used advantageously for mails at present sent *via* Suez.

In considering any diversion of the mails, the Postmaster-General would necessarily desire to examine the advantages which the western route might offer as compared with the eastern route; and, in order that he may be in a position to arrive at a conclusion on this point, I am to request that you will be good enough to supply him with detailed information, showing week by week the expected working of the service between this country and New Zealand by the San Francisco route as compared with that of Suez. Any returns which you can supply relative to the past would also be useful.

I am, &c.,

The Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

H. BUXTON FORMAN.

Enclosure 3 in No. 1.

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

SIR,—

13, Victoria Street, London, S.W., 18th May, 1899.

I am directed by the Agent-General to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 17th instant, and to state, in reference to the request of the Postmaster-General to be supplied with detailed information as regards the expected working of the service between this country and New Zealand by the San Francisco route, as compared with that of Suez, that, as soon as steps are taken by his Government with the view of establishing a fortnightly service by that route, he will take care to furnish the Postmaster-General with full information as regards both the past and future working of the service.

I am, &c.,

The Secretary, General Post Office, London.

WALTER KENNAWAY.

No. 2.

OPEN LETTER to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL from the PRESIDENT, Chamber of Commerce, Auckland.

Chamber of Commerce, Auckland, 19th May, 1899.

In view of the proposal to make Wellington a port of call for the steamers of the San Francisco mail-service, in place of Auckland, the following short statement has been prepared in order to show, judging from facts within our knowledge, how this colony as a whole and the Colony of New South Wales would be affected were the proposed change to be carried into effect.

Mails.—As Auckland, at the rate of speed of the steamers now running, is nearer to Samoa than Wellington by some twenty hours' steaming, the result of the change, in so far as the mails are concerned, would be to cause them to be delivered in Sydney in seventeen hours, or thereabouts, later than at present; in Auckland forty-eight hours later—viz., twenty hours for the longer run to Wellington and twenty-eight hours from the transit thence to Auckland, that being the average time taken; in Taranaki twenty hours later on account of the longer ocean passage, delivery in that district being accomplished in about the same time, whether from Wellington or Auckland; and Hawke's Bay District would get delivery, say, four hours later.

On the other hand, Wellington and the South Island would have the mail delivered eight hours earlier than at present, that being the difference between the average time taken to convey the mail from Auckland—twenty-eight hours—and the longer run from Samoa—twenty hours. This gain is comparatively so small when contrasted with the serious loss the North would suffer by the