

New Plymouth also to reply on Friday to English correspondence, while the mails would reach Auckland on Thursday morning.

With a service so organized, it seems to my Council that the colony would be well served if, in addition, a satisfactory connection could be arranged with America, and by that faster route with England.

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

S. CARROLL, Secretary.

No. 154.

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

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 15th October, 1901.

SHOULD New Zealand decide make extended use Federal service, could we come in on basis population? Kindly reply to-morrow.

No. 155.

The Hon. the PREMIER of the COMMONWEALTH of AUSTRALIA, Melbourne, to the Hon. the PREMIER, Wellington.

Commonwealth of Australia, Department of External Affairs,
Melbourne, 22nd November, 1901.

SIR,—

On the 15th ultimo my colleague the Hon. the Postmaster-General received a cablegram from the Secretary of the Post Office, Wellington, in the following terms: "Should New Zealand decide make extended use Federal service, could we come in on basis population? Kindly reply to-morrow."

In reply, I have the honour to inform you that this Government has no objection to offer to the proposed arrangement.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

EDMUND BARTON.

No. 156.

The Hon. the PREMIER, Wellington, to the Hon. the PREMIER of the COMMONWEALTH of AUSTRALIA, Melbourne.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 25th January, 1902.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd November last, and to thank you for agreeing to the proposal that in the event of New Zealand deciding to make extended use of the Federal mail-service this colony could come in on the basis of population.

As you are probably aware, arrangements have been made to continue the use of the steamers of the San Francisco service for the despatch of foreign correspondence.

I have, &c.,

J. CARROLL, for the Premier.

The Hon. the Premier of the Commonwealth of Australia, Melbourne.

[Read Nos. 145 and 146.]

No. 157.

The Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington, to the SECRETARY, Chamber of Commerce, Wellington.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 19th May, 1902.

I have the honour to refer to your letter of the 3rd October last, bringing under my notice, on behalf of the Council of your Chamber, the delay at Sydney and Melbourne to the European mails to and from the colony owing to the existing running of the intercolonial steamers, and urging that a more suitable time-table be arranged for mail purposes, at the same time suggesting that the express train from Dunedin for Christchurch should leave at 8 a.m., so as to enable English and Australian mails arriving *via* the Bluff to reach Wellington the following day and be forwarded to Napier, Wanganui, and New Plymouth by the morning train.

The question of an improved connection with the Federal service at Sydney and Melbourne has engaged the attention of Government for some time, but, I regret, without any definite result. I need scarcely remind you that the Union Steam Ship Company was approached in 1899 with the object of the Post Office securing a time-table which would admit of prompt connection at Sydney with the Federal steamers, but the price asked for a Wellington-Sydney service alone was so prohibitive that the negotiations were not proceeded with. It was pointed out by the company that an alteration in the time-table such as was desired would completely derange the intercolonial service, and otherwise be inconvenient, except for mails. Were an alteration of the Melbourne-Bluff time-table also involved, as suggested by your Council, this would add considerably to the price asked for the Wellington-Sydney connection.

The San Francisco service is now three-weekly, and I am of opinion that a regular weekly service as indicated by you to and from Australia is not required. However, the subject of ocean mail-services as affecting New Zealand and the Australian States is presently to be reviewed at the Conference of Premiers and representatives of the Imperial Government, and no doubt proposals will be brought forward for improving the services, which proposals will receive the earnest consideration of the Government of this colony.

I desire to add that any alteration in the running of the express trains from Dunedin, as outlined in your letter, would be distinctly disadvantageous to the wants and convenience of the travelling public, and I regret therefore that I cannot see my way to make any such change.

I have, &c.,

J. G. WARD, Postmaster-General.

The Secretary, Wellington Chamber of Commerce, Wellington.