

SAN FRANCISCO SERVICE.

PROPOSED DIRECT SERVICE, AUCKLAND AND SAN FRANCISCO.

No. 1.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to the MANAGING DIRECTOR, Union Steam Ship Company, Dunedin.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 5th October, 1909.

I am directed by the Postmaster-General to bring under your notice that the present Wellington-Tahiti mail-service expires at the end of this year. When this service was inaugurated there was a tacit understanding that it would be performed for a year by way of experiment, with the object of ascertaining whether the conditions would warrant an extension of your company's operations as far as San Francisco by the Tahiti route. The present service cannot for mail purposes be considered a satisfactory one; yet, with the slow steamers which have been running and the long stop at Tahiti, mails have reached London from New Zealand in thirty-five days, and New Zealand from London in forty days—times which approximate closely to those by way of Suez.

When in San Francisco, I had a conversation with Mr. Samuels, of the Oceanic Company, who led me to understand that he had been considering whether a satisfactory service between San Francisco and New Zealand could be arranged by employing one of his company's steamers, such as the "Sierra," your company providing one steamer; and I have no doubt, remembering what was said by Mr. Holdsworth when negotiations were in progress for the Wellington-Tahiti service, that the Oceanic Company will have communicated with you on the matter.

Sir Joseph Ward has given this question considerable attention, and directs me to say that, in view of the fact that he is about to open negotiations for a connecting service at Fiji with the Vancouver steamers, it is unlikely that the Wellington-Tahiti service in its present form can be maintained. He considers that it should not be difficult for your company, either alone or in conjunction with the Oceanic Company, to carry out a service between New Zealand and San Francisco, the steamers running the whole distance, including stoppages, in eighteen days, and is prepared to offer a reasonable subsidy for this purpose. An eighteen-days four-weekly service to San Francisco, timed to connect with the "Lusitania" or "Mauretania" at New York, would reduce the course of post to and from London to twenty-eight days. Such a service, alternating with a close connection at Fiji, would give New Zealand a mail service much superior to that at present available.

I am to inquire, therefore, whether your company is prepared to undertake the work, and, if so, what subsidy would be required. The port of call on either the outward or the inward voyage would be Auckland.

The Postmaster-General would be glad to have a reply at an early date, in order that his proposals may be submitted to Parliament without delay.

I have, &c.,

D. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

The Managing Director, Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand (Limited), Dunedin.

[P.O. 09/4193.]

No. 2.

The SECRETARY, Auckland Chamber of Commerce, Auckland, to the Right Hon. the PRIME MINISTER.
Auckland Chamber of Commerce,

SIR,—

Swanson Street, Auckland, 7th October, 1909.

I am directed to forward to you the following resolution, which was passed unanimously at a special meeting of the Council of this Chamber held to discuss the present unsatisfactory state of the mail-service between the United Kingdom and the Dominion: "That the Government be requested by this Chamber to reopen negotiations with Congress of the United States of America with the object of reinstating and reorganizing the San Francisco mail-service between the United States of America and Auckland, New Zealand, and, failing to obtain this service, the Premier be requested to use every effort to secure direct connection with Fiji and Auckland by the Canadian service said mail-service to be one of not more than twenty-eight days."

I beg to attach an editorial article and report of the Council's meeting from this morning's *New Zealand Herald* [not printed], which will inform you of the views held and expressed, and I am to convey my Council's respectful request that you will give the matter your further careful consideration.

I have, &c.,

The Right Hon. the Prime Minister, Wellington.

A. J. DENNISTON, Secretary.