

Plymouth arrives on the Wednesday of the following week at Otawhao, and there meets the mail despatched on the previous Wednesday from Napier (that is on the same Wednesday as the despatch of the mail from Auckland to Napier). The two are forwarded from Otawhao together, and arrive at Auckland on the Saturday.

Thus, a mail despatched, say, on Monday, January 2nd, for New Plymouth, would arrive there on Saturday the 7th, and the return mail for Auckland, starting on Monday, the 9th, would reach Otawhao on Wednesday, the 11th. Owing to the difficult nature of the country between Otawhao and New Plymouth, and also disinclination of the carriers to use extra diligence both in going and returning, it has not been found practicable, as yet, to carry out fully the objects proposed as regards the return mail from New Plymouth which, in order to arrive on the proper day (Wednesday) at Otawhao, starts at present on the previous Friday instead of on the Monday.

The Napier mail despatched from Auckland on Wednesday, the 4th, would arrive at Napier on Thursday the 12th, or Friday, the 13th; the mail from Napier to Auckland, despatched the same Wednesday the 4th, would reach Otawhao on the following Wednesday, the 11th (the same day as that of the arrival of the mail from New Plymouth), and the two would arrive on Saturday the 14th. Should a detention occur in any part of the line taken by the return mail previous to the junction of the two at Otawhao, one of the carriers would nevertheless proceed to Auckland, and pick up the mails from Kawhia and Raglan, while the other waited for the mail that had been detained; the carrier who went forward would arrive on the Saturday and take charge of the New Plymouth mail to be despatched on the Monday, while in all probability the second carrier, detained at Otawhao for the overdue mail, would arrive in Auckland time enough to take back with him the Napier mail on Monday. Should no detention, however, occur on either line, the two carriers would start in company from Otawhao for Auckland, the one returning with the New Plymouth mail on the Monday, and the other with the Napier mail on Wednesday.

New Plymouth
and Wellington.

The overland service between New Plymouth and Wellington was originally performed under two separate contracts; the first between New Plymouth and Wanganui, the second between Wanganui and Wellington.

As part of a plan for introducing greater regularity in the transmission of mails by this route, it was found necessary to supersede this divided service, and to enter into a contract for its performance as a whole. In consideration of the difficulties which were likely to occur in the organization of this new service, the main object of which was to attain the greatest possible speed, a low weight for the mail was specified in calling for tenders, and the times of arrival and departure at intermediate stations was left in a great measure to the discretion of the contractor.

The experience of a few months shewed that the new service caused some inconveniences, and in some respects was open to objection from which the old arrangements were free.

1st. Under the original arrangement, the mail from Wellington arrived at Wanganui on the Wednesday, and the return mail to Wellington did not leave till 2 p.m. on the following day (Thursday); the new contract allowed the contractor to demand the return mails three hours after arrival from Wellington at Wanganui, thus allowing correspondents very little time for replies.

2nd. Under the old contract, mails weighing 75 lbs. were carried, the new contract restricted the weight to 28 lbs.

3rd. Under the old contract, the mail arrived at Wellington from Wanganui at 10 a.m. on Saturday, under the new one at 1 p.m. of that day,—too late for the transaction of any business at the bank, arising out of intelligence brought by the mail.

These inconveniences have, however, now been remedied.

The result of the various improvements which, so soon as the above plan is fully in operation, will have been effected in the overland mail service between Auckland and Wellington, may be shortly summed up by saying that, whereas the average time which elapsed between the posting a letter at one end of the line and receiving a reply from the other was 52 days, the same work will then be performed in 28 days,—and this more rapid communication will have been effected partly by requiring increased speed on the part of the contractors, but principally by bringing the various links, of which the line was made up, into correspondence with each other.

Auckland and
Napier.

It was found at the commencement of the year 1857, that the mercantile relations between Auckland and Hawke's Bay had become of such importance as to make it desirable that some more regular means of communication than had been hitherto available should be established, chance traders, sailing at irregular intervals, having been till then all that correspondents had to look to for the conveyance of their letters.

A fortnightly service overland to Otawhao was already in existence, and it was determined to extend this as far as Napier. This service had been established under the "Local Posts Act 1856," by the Provincial Government of Auckland, but its extension in the manner proposed could only be effected by the General Government, because it alone could enter into the necessary negotiations with the Native owners of the land through which the mail was to be carried. Those negotiations were commenced and proved both tedious and embarrassing. It was only by the energy and tact of the Rev. J. Morgan of Otawhao and Mr. Alexander of Napier, that the difficulties were overcome.

The country between Otawhao and Napier, was in many places difficult, even for foot passengers, and quite impassable for horses, so that the first requisite for establishing a postall line was to improve the road. The jealousy felt by the Natives, lest any outlay by the Government in undertaking the necessary works should in some way or other be considered as affecting their title to the lands upon which this outlay was incurred, made it necessary to use the utmost caution in carrying on the negotiations, in order,