

No. 25.

Mr. GRAY to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Sydney.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 13th October, 1890.

THIS colony renewed Fr'isco service for twelve months. Time-table an extension of present one. Will you kindly advise other colonies, and also request them to account to this department for conveyance of mails.

No 26.

The Hon. D. O'CONNOR to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

Sydney, 14th October, 1890.

CONGRATULATE you on renewal Fr'isco contract. Other colonies will be advised as requested.

No. 27.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington.

Westminster Chambers, 13, Victoria Street, London, S.W.,

SIR,—

22nd August, 1890.

On receiving your telegram of the 19th instant respecting the ocean mail-services, I was obliged to send you an immediate message that I did not think there was the slightest chance of getting an answer from the Imperial Government to your questions before your prorogation.

Mr. Raikes was then on the Continent; he has just returned, and is at his place in Wales; but Mr. Goschen left immediately the Imperial Parliament was prorogued, and I now learn at the Post Office that it is considered hopeless to look for any decision from the Treasury before your session closes.

I was not sure that I correctly understood all your message, and should have cabled to inquire further, but thought it best not to delay sending in a letter to the Postmaster-General. I now enclose copy of my letter.

The points on which I was not clear are these: (1.) In the passage asking what the Imperial authorities would agree to pay for—a four-weekly Direct, or, failing Fr'isco, a fortnightly Direct service, I was uncertain whether the way in which the words "failing 'Fr'isco" were placed indicated that they were to be read as only applying to a fortnightly service and not a weekly. (2.) I was not sure whether the words "forty-two forty-five days" meant that English mails direct might be delivered at some time between forty-two and forty-five days, or that the Imperial contribution might be expected to vary according as delivery was contracted for in forty-two days or in forty-five. (3.) I was not clear whether the words from "Federal packets" down to "correspondence" were to be read as an instruction to claim that in no case should letters be sent by the P. and O. or Orient packets unless specially so addressed.

It did not, however, seem to be so important to make sure of these passages in your telegram being correctly interpreted, as to send in the application at once on the main point of the Imperial contribution to a temporary renewal of the San Francisco service, and I can only hope that the way in which I have put the matter to Mr. Raikes may not be contrary to your meaning. One difficulty is pretty sure to arise in any case, about the Imperial contribution, because I am unable to tell the London Office whether the United States' offer of the £12,000 would be accepted, or, how the money would be taken into account. From what passed in my interview with Mr. Raikes at the end of June, I should think the Treasury would certainly demand this question to be settled before consenting to carry the mails to and from San Francisco even for another year,

I have, &c.,

F. D. BELL.

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Wellington.

Enclosure in No. 27.

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

SIR,—

13, Victoria Street, 20th August, 1890.

I have received a telegram from my Government on the subject of ocean mail services, the purport of which I beg you to be kind enough to submit to Her Majesty's Postmaster-General.

It will be in your recollection that, when Mr. Raikes was pleased to give me an interview at the end of June, it had not been decided whether New Zealand would come into the proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the reduction of colonial postage; so that the points we then discussed were necessarily more or less of a tentative kind. But I am now desired to state that my Government intend to ask the New Zealand Parliament to agree to Mr. Goschen's proposals; and therefore the question of the ocean mail-services between this country and New Zealand has reached a stage when it is hoped that Her Majesty's Government will have no difficulty in coming to a decision at once on the points I now wish to lay before Mr. Raikes.

A cable message has been received by my Government from Washington to the effect that the Tonnage Subsidy Bill, which had been for some time past before Congress, must still be delayed; but, in the meantime, the United States offer a contribution of £12,000 towards a renewal of the San Francisco service, which offer is now under consideration.

It seems likely, however, that when the matter is brought before the New Zealand Legislature, it may be deemed more expedient only to make a temporary arrangement again for twelve months, pending further negotiations with the American authorities; and I am to ask whether the Imperial