

No. 64.

The Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington, to the SUPERINTENDENT of FOREIGN MAILS,
Washington.

Post Office and Telegraph Department, General Post Office, Wellington,
17th May, 1892.

SIR,—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 18th and 24th March last, on the subject of payment of transit charges.

In reference to the third paragraph of the former letter, I have to point out that mine of the 28th January stated that this department claimed exemption from only the Atlantic transit charges on mails despatched before the 5th December last. For the United States territorial transit New Zealand is liable for payment from the 1st October preceding. The British Post Office is therefore responsible for the cost of the Atlantic conveyance of the closed mails for Great Britain up to the 5th December last.

This office will settle direct with your own the accounts for the intermediary transit. I note your representations as to changing the basis of payment, and the date thereof; but I venture, nevertheless, to express the hope that you will see fit to acquiesce in the payment by actual weight for some time longer than the period to the 30th proximo. The variation which I have mentioned in the quantity of mail-matter despatched and received by the San Francisco service is likely to continue until the mail-services between New Zealand and the United Kingdom are placed on a more permanent footing than they are on at present. If, therefore, you can see your way to allow the payment by actual weight to be continued up to, say, the expiry of the present San Francisco service contract in November next, it will be, I anticipate, the means of securing a much fairer adjustment of accounts than would be obtainable through the triennial statistics. It should also be remembered that the payments to the contractors for sea-conveyance are based on the actual weights.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY,

For the Postmaster-General.

The Superintendent,

Office of Foreign Mails, Post Office Department, Washington, D.C.

No. 65.

The SUPERINTENDENT of FOREIGN MAILS, Washington, to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL,
Wellington.

Post Office Department, Office of Foreign Mails, Washington, D.C.,
20th June, 1892.

SIR,—

I have the honour, by direction of the Postmaster-General, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 17th ultimo, with reference to previous correspondence closing with this department's letter of the 24th March last, relative to the settlement of the claims of this department for compensation for the intermediary transit of closed mails made up in New Zealand and despatched to San Francisco to be forwarded to destinations beyond the United States.

Due notice has been taken of your statement that your Administration is to be held responsible for the United States territorial transit charges on the closed mails in question despatched on and after the 1st October, 1891, but that it is responsible for the charges for the Atlantic sea-conveyance of the said mails despatched only on and after the 5th December, 1891, the British office being responsible for the charges for the Atlantic sea-conveyance of the said mails despatched up to the 5th December last.

Respecting your request that the present method of settling the intermediary transit charges on the closed mails in question, upon the basis of the actual net weights of the mails, be continued for a short period after the 1st proximo, I am directed to inform you that, in view of the representations in your letter under reply, this department consents to continue the present method up to the 1st January, 1893, but prefers that the transit charges on all closed mails despatched on and after 1st January, 1893, shall be settled exclusively upon the basis of the international transit statistics to be taken in November, 1893, pursuant to the provisions of Article 4 of the Universal Postal Convention of Vienna, and Article XXIII. of the regulations for its execution.

In this connection, it may be well to call your attention to the circumstance that, notwithstanding this department settles upon the statistical basis with all other postal administrations for the intermediary transit of closed mails, it does not settle upon that basis with the steamship companies which convey the closed mails from the United States, but makes settlement with those companies upon the actual net weights of the mails conveyed. Consequently, it is necessary for this department to be advised of the net weights of each closed mail made up in other countries and despatched to the United States to be forwarded by sea to destinations beyond the United States; and I am directed, therefore, to request that, for the future, you will cause the net weights (in grammes) of each closed mail made up in New Zealand and despatched to San Francisco to be forwarded by sea to destinations beyond the United States to be invariably stated opposite the entry of the mail in question in the letter-bill of the mails for the office of San Francisco.

It will not be necessary to enter on the letter-bills for San Francisco the weights of the closed mails for Canada, for the reason that those mails are forwarded overland to Canada, and, consequently, do not enter into the accounts between this department and the steamship companies.

I am, &c.,

N. M. BROOKS,

Superintendent of Foreign Mails.

The Postmaster-General, Wellington, New Zealand.