

No. 66.

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

Post Office and Telegraph Department, General Post Office, Wellington,
6th September, 1892.

SIR,—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 20th June last, in the matter of payment of transit charges for correspondence despatched from New Zealand to the United Kingdom *via* the United States.

With reference to the Atlantic transit, I have to inform you that the London office now wishes this office to pay to your own direct all the charges incurred after the 1st October, 1891, and afterwards reclaim from it those for the period between the 1st October and the 5th December.

It will be noticed, therefore, that this office will pay for both territorial and sea conveyance from the 1st October.

I am obliged for your agreeing to allow the payment of the transit charges according to actual net weight of the mails to subsist up to the 1st January next, and preparation will be made for payment on the basis of the triennial statistics from that date.

Your remarks on the settlement of accounts with the steamship companies on the basis of actual weight are noted. In reply to your request in reference thereto, I have to inform you that the only closed mail now made up from New Zealand for despatch through the United States, and not already shown on the transshipment form, giving actual weight in grammes, is that for Vancouver Island. Although you have excepted Canada (no doubt that portion to which land-carriage only is ever required) from the scope of your request, the weight of the Vancouver mails, which may sometimes be carried by sea, will be advised in grammes on the San Francisco letter-bill.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY,

For the Postmaster-General.

The Superintendent,

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

No. 67.

Mr. CREIGHTON to Mr. GRAY.

SIR,—

San Francisco, 20th July, 1892.

I have the honour to enclose herewith copy of memorial to Congress on the subject of the Australian mail-service adopted by the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce at its regular quarterly meeting yesterday, and which had been forwarded by the Board of Directors to the Californian delegation in Washington on the 9th instant in anticipation of the action of the Chamber.

It is hardly probable that anything will be accomplished during the present session of Congress, as the adjournment is fixed for the 25th instant. Upon the assembling of Congress in December the matter will be taken up and pushed vigorously. The question has been quietly but extensively agitated, and powerful influences will be exerted to put the Australian mail-service on a permanent footing, in view of the threatened opposition by the Canadian Pacific Company. This is a matter which affects the earnings of all American trans-continental railroad-lines.

I have, &c.,

ROBT. J. CREIGHTON.

W. Gray, Esq., Secretary, Post Office, Wellington.

Enclosure in No. 67.

The San Francisco CHAMBER of COMMERCE to CONGRESS.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled.

THIS memorial of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, adopted at a meeting of the said Chamber on the 19th day of July, 1892, respectfully sheweth,—

1. That for a period of twenty-two years past direct mail-communication has been maintained between the port of San Francisco and the Colonies of New Zealand and Australia through subsidies paid almost exclusively to American steamship companies by the New Zealand and Australian Governments, and that such direct mail-service has resulted in great expansion of American trade and commerce.

2. That the Australian mail-service is performed at the present time by the Oceanic Steamship Company of San Francisco, an exclusively American corporation, with the aid of one British steamship, the employment of which is obligatory under the contract with the New Zealand Government, which pays most of the cost.

3. That this contract expires in November, 1892, and there is almost a certainty that the service will be abandoned unless the United States Post Office hereafter bears a fair and reasonable share of the cost of maintaining it.

4. That the withdrawal of the Oceanic Steamship Company's vessels from the Australian trade would be in the nature of a calamity to American trade, depriving our merchants and manufacturers of direct connection with the rich and progressive Anglo-Saxon commonwealths in the Pacific Ocean, and compelling them to send their correspondence the roundabout way of England and the Red Sea route, which, by reason of the great length of time occupied in transit from this country, would be fatal to our commerce; or by the heavily subsidised Canadian line from Vancouver, B.C., which this Chamber is informed and believes will start in opposition to the American line from San Francisco about the month of November next, when the existing contract with the Oceanic Company expires.