

The new service will commence at San Francisco on the 21st November, and will be continued every three weeks thereafter. The first despatch from Auckland will be on the 29th December, and is due at San Francisco on the 14th January. There will probably be no San Francisco despatch from New Zealand on the 26th November, as the present service from New Zealand leaves on the 29th October, in which case the mails will be forwarded *via* Suez.

As the proposed resolutions are to be submitted to the New Zealand Parliament on Monday next, my Government is anxious for an urgent reply.

The Secretary, General Post Office.

I have, &c.,

W. P. REEVES.

Enclosure 3 in No. 95.

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

SIR,—

General Post Office, 5th October, 1900.

With reference to your letter of the 2nd instant, respecting the proposed three-weekly mail-service between San Francisco and New Zealand by the vessels of Messrs. Spreckels under contract with the United States Government, I am directed by the Postmaster-General to inform you that it is not possible, without further study of all the conditions, to decide whether the British Post Office should forward mails for conveyance to New Zealand by the service in question. A definite reply to the question shall be sent to you as early as possible.

If mails are so sent from England, this office will, of course, pay for their land and sea transit in accordance with the provisions of the Postal Union Convention. In the absence of a special arrangement on the subject between the Post Offices of New Zealand and the United States, the sea-postage would fall to the last-named office.

As regards the use of fast steamers on the Atlantic, I am to point out that this office would, of course, employ the Cunard steamers, as a Saturday departure from London would give the closest connection with the departure of the steamers from San Francisco. It would not, however, be possible so to regulate the order in which the steamers of the line in question carry the United States mails from this country that the "Campania" or "Lucania" should always be employed when a New Zealand mail has to be forwarded. The British Post Office has no power to determine by what steamers the mails from New Zealand shall be despatched from New York.

The Postmaster-General will be glad to receive full details of the arrangement with Messrs. Spreckels as soon as you are in a position to supply them.

I am, &c.,

The Agent-General for New Zealand.

G. H. MURRAY.

[For Enclosure 4 in No. 95, see No. 10.]

Enclosure 5 in No. 95.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES.

SIR,—

13, Victoria Street, S.W., 6th October, 1900.

I have the honour to inform you that, in consequence of the arrangements of a contract entered into between the Government of the United States and Messrs. Spreckels, the conditions of the mail-service between England and New Zealand *via* San Francisco are to be changed. Henceforth, instead of the present service—a mail every four weeks—there will be a mail every three weeks, and the colony will therefore have seventeen mails in the year instead of thirteen as at present. As the San Francisco mail-service is still much the fastest method of communication between New Zealand and the Mother-country, its importance to the colony is obvious.

By direction of my Government, I have addressed a request to the Right Hon. the Postmaster-General that the Imperial Post Office should be pleased to recognise the new service, and forward seventeen mails in the year by San Francisco instead of thirteen as hitherto. To this I have received a reply that the General Post Office cannot give an immediate answer. I understand that the reason of the delay is that the Post Office has to submit the financial aspect of the change to the Treasury. The New Zealand Parliament is now sitting, but the session is drawing to an end, and my Government is anxious to have an answer from the Imperial Post Office in order that the requisite resolutions may be submitted to Parliament. It is, moreover, proposed that the new service should begin next month, at which time the old service comes to an end. I have explained to the authorities of the Imperial Post Office that the matter is one of urgency, and, as very great inconvenience to trade and commerce and to many private persons in New Zealand will result if there is any delay, I venture to draw your attention to the matter and solicit your good offices.

I have, &c.,

W. P. REEVES.

The Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Enclosure 6 in No. 95.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Downing Street, 10th October, 1900.

I am directed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th instant, respecting the proposed change in the service of mails between this country