

immensely stimulating effect upon large numbers of people who are afraid to face the journey, partly on account of the length of time involved and partly owing to the fact that steamers are comparatively small. You can only get over these difficulties by being willing to pay something for the alteration. All I wish to say further now on this matter is that there has been no commitment by me on behalf of the colony to this or any other mail-service, or to anything else. I made it my business to urge a particular course, and also to see that everything was left perfectly clear and open in order that the Parliament of the country should have an opportunity of considering any practical concrete proposal, providing the British Government were able to do what was urged by me at the Conference. That is my position, and it is one that is quite clear and is entirely defensible. I should like to say, regarding the San Francisco service, that it was the fastest service and the cheapest service we had; but we could not go on attempting to support the service in view of its irregularity and the condition into which it had from various causes fallen. To have done so would have been unfair; and as soon as that was seen, and I recognised that it was impossible to enter into another contract, I authorised its discontinuance as a subsidised line. I saw that it was impossible to run the steamers satisfactorily. It has been urged that we should have an all-red mail-service between New Zealand and England. I fully agree to that. I am sorry that the San Francisco service had to be abandoned, because, although that service did not fly the British flag, it flies the American flag—a cosmopolitan flag representing many millions of an English-speaking community—and though, as a matter of choice, I should infinitely have preferred to see an all-red route with the British flag flying, especially between this country and the Old Land, I am sensible of the great convenience that the mail and passenger service across the American Continent has been for so many years to the people of this country. Now, one word about the Suez route. We have endeavoured to get the intercolonial steamers to leave the colony on Friday instead of Saturday weekly, in order to give us a mail connection with the Old Country; but any honourable member who has not travelled across the oceans makes a great mistake if he imagines he can go *via* Suez to London in anything like the time occupied on the other route.

Mr. ATKEN.—Nobody expects it.

The Right Hon. Sir J. G. WARD.—No, perhaps nobody expects it, and there is nothing at present possibly better for us to open up in that way.

Mr. ATKEN.—What about mails from Sydney?

The Right Hon. Sir J. G. WARD.—Well, I will take another opportunity of acquainting the House with some facts in regard to that question. Only on two occasions, even if we had paid a large sum, could we have got the mails away from Sydney quicker than they were despatched; and if the honourable member thinks there is any great improvement possible in that direction he is mistaken. This colony, I maintain, ought to aim at bringing itself closer to England and bringing England closer to it if we desire to get some of the benefits of the great tourist traffic that is now going to other lands, where these tourists are spending millions of money. If we could get larger numbers of them to New Zealand it would do a great deal for our business people, for settlers, for workmen, and for the seamen and wharf workers from end to end of the colony. The more money that is spent and left in the colony the better it is for every class in the community. However, I have been negotiating with a view to securing a weekly service *via* Suez, and I shall be only too glad to refer to it again at the proper time.

No. 105.

The HIGH COMMISSIONER to the Hon. the PRIME MINISTER.

SIR,— Westminster Chambers, 13 Victoria Street, London, S.W., 30th August, 1907.

I beg to transmit the undermentioned printed papers relating to the proposed route between the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and to the Blacksod Harbour Syndicate who propose to tender for the establishment of the service as referred to in my cablegrams of the 2nd, 8th, and 30th instant [not printed]:—

(1.) Imperial Route. Great Britain to Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Advisory Committee in favour of Blacksod Bay (Ireland) Route. 29th July, 1907. [Not printed.]

(2.) Collooney, Ballina, and Belmullet Railways and Piers Bill, 1907. List of Promoters. [Not printed.]

(3.) Imperial Route. Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Hong Kong. Report on proposed Cross-channel Ferry-steamers by Sir William Henry White, K.C.B., F.R.S. (late Director of Naval Construction, H.M. Royal Navy) to Sir Thomas Troubridge, Bart., 66 Gloucester Gardens, Hyde Park, London, W. 19th June, 1907.

(4.) Map of Imperial Fast Line to Canada, Hong Kong, Australia, and New Zealand.

(5.) Imperial Route. Great Britain to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Hong Kong.

I have, &c.,

WALTER KENNAWAY,

For the High Commissioner.

The Hon. the Prime Minister, Wellington.

[Van. Conn., 07, 77.]