

No. 12.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to the MANAGER IN THE PACIFIC, Pacific Cable Board, Sydney.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 8th November, 1911.

I have the honour to forward herewith copy of a telegram dated the 12th ultimo from the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce relating to the route of the proposed new cable between Australia and New Zealand. The Chamber has been informed that the matter is under the control of your Board, and that a copy of its telegram will be forwarded to you.

I have, &c.,

D. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

J. Milward, Esq., Pacific Cable Board, 64 Pitt Street, Sydney.

[P.C. Fin. and Constr. 11/134.]

No. 13.

The MANAGER IN THE PACIFIC, Pacific Cable Board, Sydney, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

SIR,—

Dixon's Buildings, 64 Pitt Street, Sydney, 10th November, 1911.

With reference to the matter of landing-places for the proposed direct New Zealand-Australia cable, I have the honour to inform you that, as a result of the survey and investigation made in the vicinity of Auckland, and after the consultation with the Prime Minister and yourself, I am recommending the Board to adopt Auckland as our New Zealand station, in preference to continuing at Doubtless Bay. The survey has proved that no unsurmountable engineering difficulties exist, and the estimated cost for connecting the main cable-ends on the west and east coasts and the Auckland Post-office is not prohibitive.

The landing-place selected on the west coast for the Sydney cable is Rangira Beach, just north of Oaia Island, and opposite Muriwai Creek. The distance from this spot to the new Auckland Post-office is approximately twenty-two miles. For the first two miles from the beach the connecting cable can be laid in the Muriwai Creek, then ten miles trenching over easy undulating country, the subsoil of which is clay, with no hard ground or rocks, to Harking's Point, from where the cable can be safely laid down the Waitemata Harbour, and land on the same spot as the cables laid by your Department to connect the northern suburbs of Auckland with your main system of telegraphs and telephones. From the landing-place at Ponsonby I have intimated to my Board that your Department will possibly be able to allow us the use of a spare telephone-cable conduit for our cables.

As regards the east coast landing-place for the Doubtless Bay connection, a very suitable place is available on Takapuna Beach, and if the cable is laid as close in-shore as possible after passing Tiritiri Island no danger from ships' anchors, trawling, or other causes need be anticipated. From the proposed landing-place to the Post-office the distance is approximately 5.5 miles, made up of half a mile easy road trenching between the cable hut and the harbour, three miles across the harbour to the same landing-place at Ponsonby as for the west coast cable, and two miles from Ponsonby to the Post-office. For the latter length the same trench or conduit can be utilized as for the west coast cable.

From a purely engineering point of view, it will thus be seen that no real objections can be advanced against the scheme.

As regards the other aspects of the matter, the following is a verbatim copy of my report to the Board:—

For the Proposal.—(a.) All intercolonial traffic (*i.e.*, messages between Australia and New Zealand in both directions) will be subject to one less transmission, which must result in less delay and increased accuracy; also a reduction in the total cost of handling this traffic. (b.) It will place the Board's route in an unassailable position as regards ability to successfully compete for this traffic. (c.) Loss of revenue and prestige caused by diversion of traffic through interruptions to the Auckland-Doubtless Bay land line will be avoided. (d.) Office accommodation to be provided by the New Zealand Government in the new Auckland Post-office free of charge.

Against the Proposal.—Additional capital outlay and sinking fund on cost of Doubtless Bay-Auckland cable, plus (as an outside estimate) £1,000 additional cost for trenching cables between the west and east coast landing-places and Auckland. Against this sum must be placed (say) £3,500 as the cost of additions and alterations to the present buildings if Doubtless Bay is selected. After carefully considering the matter from all points of view, I have no hesitation in recommending the Board to adopt the Auckland scheme. I am satisfied the extra expenditure to be incurred would be justified by the obvious advantages gained in handling the traffic, and the almost certain extra revenue derivable from increased business. It should, I think, be remembered that the policy of cable companies nowadays is to bring the ends of their cables right into the heart of traffic centres. A moderate expenditure of capital, which admits of the traffic being handled with a smaller number of transmissions (and therefore with less cost), must, I think, be justified, especially when it is remembered that the tendency in the future is towards a reduction of rates."

With regard to the question raised by me in my interview with the Prime Minister and yourself concerning a proportion of the staff expenses at present incurred by your Department for manning the Doubtless Bay-Auckland wire being handed over to the Board in the event of the cables being brought to Auckland, I have informed my Board that nothing definite was decided on between us, but that some arrangement might result from negotiations on this point whereby the present annual payment made to the Board for staffing the Doubtless Bay end of the wire