

Two men to carry the mail between Auckland and Otawhao, at £3					
10s each for every double trip, or £7	.....	.....	.....	£364	0 0
Between Otawhao and New Plymouth, per double trip, £8	.....			£416	0 0
				<hr/>	
				£780	0 0

But this diversion of the road from the coast to an inland line left the settlers at Raglan and Kawhia unprovided for; in order, therefore, to restore these places to their former footing, it would become necessary to establish a branch line in connection with the main line, the cost of which was to be £2 per double trip, or £104 per annum, which added to the above sum of £780, would bring the annual expense of the new line up to £884.

The service by the coast had been performed at an annual cost of about £400.

The objection to the proposed alteration reduced itself therefore to one of expense, in every other respect it promised to be a great improvement on the service previously in existence, which, for all purposes of business transactions depending upon regularity of communication, was all but useless.

Taking all the circumstances into consideration, it appeared that a speedy and regular communication every fortnight would be more valuable than an imperfect and irregular communication every week, and an arrangement was made for the conveyance of the mail from Auckland by the inland route to Taranaki fortnightly for half the sum of £884 above mentioned as the price of the weekly service—that is to say, for £442, or £42 more than the original service by the West Coast.

This increase of cost, however, is apparent rather than real, inasmuch as the charge of £364 for the conveyance between Auckland and Otawhao includes that for the conveyance of the Napier mail also between these places, so that instead of charging the whole against the New Plymouth service, only half of that sum, or £182, ought properly to be taken into account, and thus the cost of the whole line between Auckland and New Plymouth would be reduced from £442 to £260 per annum.

As regards the whole of the overland line between Auckland and Wellington the substitution of a fortnightly for a weekly mail service, so far from retarding the communication between the two places, has actually hastened it.

Under previous arrangements letters posted in Auckland could not be delivered in Wellington till after the lapse of about three weeks,—supposing for instance the mail to start on the Monday, it did not reach New Plymouth till the Tuesday of the following week at the earliest. In the meantime, however, that week's mail had started from New Plymouth, and therefore the mail arriving from Auckland had to lie in the Post Office there till the following day of despatch, or a fortnight after the original despatch from Auckland. At present the Auckland mail despatched on the Monday reaches New Plymouth on the Saturday of the same week, and is forwarded on Monday or a week after instead of a fortnight, after the original despatch. In the one case it would traverse the whole distance in three weeks, in the other in a fortnight. Thus even with the alternate service only between Auckland and New Plymouth, the longest time that can elapse between the posting of a letter at Auckland and its delivery at Wellington is three weeks, during one whole week of which time it would have remained in the Post Office at which it was originally posted. The general result being to give opportunities for posting for a whole week longer than before.

In order to see how the new service affected the question of expense, it will be necessary, as already intimated, to consider the new line to New Plymouth in connection with that between Auckland and Napier, because the new arrangement relieved the latter of the expense of conveying the mails between Auckland and Otawhao.

The expense, under former arrangements, of the Auckland and New Plymouth, and Auckland and Napier lines together, were:—

	£	s.	d.
Auckland to New Plymouth, (say) ... ..	400	0	0
Auckland to Napier ... ..	241	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£641	0	0

The expenses of the latter line were divided as follows:—

Auckland to Maungatawhiri ... ..	26	0	0
Maungatawhiri to Otawhao ... ..	39	0	0
Otawhao to Napier ... ..	176	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£241	0	0

Under the new arrangement, the charges for the two first portions fall away, amounting to £65; this part of the contract being included in that for the conveyance of the New Plymouth mail. The deduction of this sum, therefore, reduces the expense of the Napier Mail to £176 per annum. The two services are consequently now performed at the following expense:—

	£	s.	d.
Auckland to New Plymouth ... ..	442	0	0
Auckland to Napier ... ..	176	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£618	0	0

—Shewing that the alteration has caused a reduction in the expense of about £23. A despatch takes place from Auckland by one mail carrier to New Plymouth on every alternate Monday, arriving at New Plymouth on the Saturday following; and by the second carrier for Napier, on every alternate Wednesday, arriving on the Thursday or Friday of the following week. The return mail from New