

No. 44.

Copy of a Letter from A. VILLEMSENS, Esq., to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, New Zealand.

[TRANSLATION.]

SIR,—

Wellington, 4th August, 1868.

I have the honor to inform you of the mission intrusted to me by the Commandant of the French Establishments in Oceania and Imperial Commissioner at the Society Islands, relative to the transmission of our mails from Tahiti to Europe and *vice versa*, by way of New Zealand.

I have therefore the honor to submit to you this question, which concerns the department under your direction.

The actual manner in which our correspondence is effected is by way of San Francisco. In wishing to change it, the Imperial Commissioner has two objects—to profit, if possible, by the service of the Australian, New Zealand, and Royal Mail Company as at present organized, so as to expedite the exchange between Europe and Tahiti, as well as to establish constant communication between New Zealand and Tahiti, and thus develop the commerce between the two Colonies. This desire on his part is very strong; for if on the one hand we succeed in saving time, supposing that the European mail can be handed to us at Opara, on the other hand we shall certainly lose time by sending our mail for Europe *via* New Zealand, instead of sending it direct to San Francisco, as we have done up to the present time.

These conditions established, I think that the request that I have to make resolves into the following questions:—

1st, Will the New Zealand Post Office consent to forward to Europe the mails from Tahiti, which will be delivered every month in a sealed packet at the Auckland Post Office, by a French vessel coming from Tahiti with them?

2nd, Will the New Zealand Post Office consent to deliver our sealed mail (*correspondance fermée*) coming from Europe for Tahiti either at Opara into the hands of the French resident, or at the Auckland Post Office, should the Tahitian authorities find at a future time that it would be more simple to send a single vessel to carry the mails to and from Auckland?

3rd, If it should happen that the Government of Tahiti is prevented sending its mails for Europe to Auckland, will it be possible for it to deposit the mail at Opara for transmission to Auckland, where it would be forwarded to Europe by the next mail for Panama?

4th, What are the conditions upon which the New Zealand Post Office will carry on this mail service?

I beg, honorable sir, to claim from your kindness the weight of your influence with the members of the New Zealand Government, to give to these questions the most advantageous settlement, and the most in accordance with the wishes expressed by the Imperial Commissioner of Tahiti.

In conclusion, I have to inform you that the Government of New South Wales which had to be consulted on this question by reason of the subsidy paid by that Colony to the Royal Mail Company, has declared that it will give its best endeavours towards concluding the negotiation (conditions) that the New Zealand Post Office may decide upon as suitable to enter upon with the Government of Tahiti.

I have, &c.,

A. VILLEMSENS,

Lieut. de Vaisseau,

Commandant le Navire de I.M. "La Dorade."

The Hon. the Postmaster-General,
Wellington,

No. 45.

Copy of a Letter from the Hon. J. DOCKER to A. VILLEMSENS, Esq.

General Post Office,

Sydney, 20th June, 1868.

SIR,—

I have the honor to inform you that I have brought under the consideration of the Government your observations upon preceding correspondence, as contained in your letter of the 5th instant.

The Government being desirous to the utmost of its power to meet the views of the authorities at Tahiti, begs to state that no objection will exist on the part of this Colony to place Tahiti on the same footing as the non-contributing Colonies of Australia, viz., to carry their closed mails for a fixed sum per pound of the gross weight. But I apprehend that in this case the mails must be received and despatched from New Zealand, as doubts exists whether under the contract the P. and N.Z.R.M. Steam Navigation Company could be compelled to receive them at Rapa (Opara).

I beg to add that you are at liberty to show this communication to the New Zealand Government.

I have, &c.,

A. VillemSENS, Esq.,

J. DOCKER,

Commanding H.I.M.S. "Dorade," Sydney.

Postmaster-General.

No. 46.

Copy of a Letter from the Hon. JOHN HALL to A. VILLEMSENS, Esq.

General Post Office,

Wellington, 8th August, 1868.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 4th instant, in which under instructions received by you from the Commandant of the French Establishments in Oceania, and Imperial Commissioner for the Society Islands, you address to this department inquiries relative to the transmission by the steam mail service established between Australia, New Zealand, and Panama, of mails between France and Tahiti, and in which you point out that irrespective of the postal advantages to be derived from such an arrangement by enabling Tahiti to avail itself of this mail service, important