

REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE ON POSTAL COMMUNICATION.

No. 1.

REPORT.

THE Select Committee appointed to inquire into and report upon the Steam Services which it may be desirable to subsidize, with a view of maintaining efficient postal communication between this Colony, the Australian Colonies, and Europe, beg leave to report as follows:—

The questions referred to your Committee appear to resolve themselves into two—

- 1st. The arrangement which it may be most desirable to adopt for the conveyance of the New Zealand-English Mails to and from Australia, and the probable cost of the same.
- 2nd. The advantages to be derived by this Colony from the establishment of a Mail Service *via* Torres Straits, or from the establishment of a Mail Service between New Zealand and San Francisco, and the relative cost of such services.

With regard to the first question, it appears to your Committee, after having taken all the evidence within their reach, and after a full consideration of the various arrangements under which these mails can be transmitted, that practically the choice to be made lies between a single Intercolonial Service, similar to the one at present in operation between Melbourne, Hokitika, and Wellington, but continued to Port Chalmers and the Bluff: and a double Intercolonial Service, having one steamer running between Sydney and Auckland, and the other between Melbourne, the Bluff, Port Chalmers, and Wellington. With a view of putting clearly before your honorable House the relative advantages of the two schemes, your Committee have prepared a Table, showing the dates upon which an English Mail would be delivered at the several ports in New Zealand if sent by the single service and the double service respectively.

TIME TABLE showing the DATES of ARRIVAL at the various Ports of NEW ZEALAND of an ENGLISH MAIL leaving Southampton on the 12th June, if sent by one Intercolonial Service, or if sent by two Services.

Ports.					One Service <i>via</i> Hokitika, Wellington, and Port Chalmers.				Two Services, one <i>via</i> the Bluff to Wellington, and one <i>via</i> Sydney and Auckland.			
Southampton	...	...	...	dep.	June	12	...	...	June	12		
Melbourne	...	...	...	arr.	August	5	...	...	August	5		
Sydney	...	...	...	arr.			...	...	"	8		
Auckland	...	...	...	arr.	"	17	...	...	"	14		
New Plymouth	...	...	...	arr.	"	16	...	...	"	16		
Nelson	...	...	...	arr.	"	14	...	...	"	17		
Picton	...	...	...	arr.	"	13	...	...	"	18		
Napier	...	...	...	arr.	"	14	...	...	"	17		
Wellington	...	...	...	arr.	"	13	...	...	"	16		
Lyttelton	...	...	...	arr.	"	15	...	...	"	14		
Port Chalmers	...	...	...	arr.	"	17	...	...	"	12		
Bluff	...	...	...	arr.	"	19	...	...	"	11		
Hokitika	...	...	...	arr.	"	11	...	...	"	19		

It will be seen that by the single service the mails would be delivered earlier than by the double services, by three days at Nelson, Napier, and Wellington, by five days at Picton, and by eight days at Hokitika and Greymouth; while by the double services they would be delivered earlier at Auckland by three days, at Port Chalmers by five days, at the Bluff by eight days, and at Lyttelton by one day. At New Plymouth the time of delivery would be the same in both cases. The value of an acceleration in the delivery of the English mails at the principal ports in New Zealand is, however, greatly lessened by the fact that in every instance the outgoing English mail will have been despatched a few days before the arrival of the inward mail. No practicable acceleration can, under the existing Time Table of the P. and O. Company's vessels, afford to New Zealand an opportunity of an early reply to English letters.

The relative cost of the two schemes would probably be as follows:—