

No. 15.

Mr. GRAY to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, London.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 28th September, 1874.

I have been desired to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd December last, enclosing copy of the return which had been prepared in your office showing the total weight of letters, books, patterns, and newspapers sent to the several Australian Colonies during the period of two months, and of the number of single rates of postage levied on each class of correspondence. From that return, it had been calculated that the sums which should be accounted for to this office by your department on the mails despatched to this colony would be,—

On correspondence despatched *viâ* Southampton or *viâ* San Francisco—

Letters	...	...	...	...	...	1s. 3½d. per oz.
Newspapers	...	...	...	...	...	Os. 3½d. per lb.
Books	...	...	...	...	...	1s. 2d. per lb.

On correspondence despatched *viâ* Brindisi—

Letters	...	...	...	...	...	1s. 2d. per oz.
Newspapers	...	...	...	...	...	Os. 2½d. per lb.
Books	...	...	...	...	...	1s. 2¾d. per lb.

And, in compliance with the request made in the concluding portion of your letter, I have the honor to inform you that the Postmaster-General approves of the rates proposed to be accounted for to this colony on the correspondence despatched from the United Kingdom by the respective routes of San Francisco, Southampton, and Brindisi.

2. It is regretted that this reply was not forwarded you at an earlier date.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY,

Secretary.

The Secretary, General Post Office, London.

No. 16.

Mr. LAMBTON to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Sydney, 11th April, 1874.

I am directed to forward you the enclosed copy of correspondence which it has been deemed expedient to address to the Postmaster-General, London, in reference to the conveyance of the Australasian mails from England to the United States of America.

I have, &c.,

S. H. LAMBTON,

Secretary.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

Enclosure 1 in No. 16.

The Hon. SAUL SAMUEL to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, London.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Sydney, 11th April, 1874.

Referring to my telegram to you of the 8th instant, copy of which I attach hereto, I have the honor to state that when it was arranged that Tuesday should be the day for despatch from London of the mails for New South Wales *viâ* San Francisco, it was on the distinct understanding that the Cunard Company intended to run a fast packet on the line between Liverpool and Boston on that day, expressly to expedite the transit of Australian mails and passengers. It would not, however, appear that any but slow steamers have hitherto been employed for this service, for the mails which were despatched from London on the 13th January and 10th February were respectively two and eight days behind time at arrival at Boston, while it seems, from telegraphic information just received, the mails despatched from London on the 10th March were also at least two days late at Boston.

It has been represented that at the same period, when the Australian and New Zealand mails were carried by the Cunard Company's slow steamers, other vessels made quick passages between England and New York. In the case of the February mails, it is alleged a passage was made from England to New York in five days less time than the Boston packet.

It is satisfactory to this colony that the mails have been conveyed on time between Boston and San Francisco, and that the contract time allowed between San Francisco and Sydney has not been exceeded in the case of the February mail, nor would it have been in that of the January mail had it not been for the unfortunate circumstance of the steamship "Macgregor" going ashore at Kandavau.

So far as this new mail service has yet proceeded, it is evident that if the arrangements as regards the transit across the Atlantic Ocean were more satisfactory than they are, the San Francisco route, in which is concerned the interests of the whole of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, with a population of upwards of 2,000,000, would soon become a very expeditious and popular one.

Having pointed out the circumstances which militate against the success of the San Francisco service, I have to ask that you will kindly use your influence with the Cunard Company to obtain a quick steamer for the carriage of Australian mails on Tuesday, as fixed by the time-table.

If a quick steamer to Boston cannot be secured on the Tuesday in question, there appears to be no alternative but to change the day of despatch from London to the Thursday following, when the mail would be carried by more expeditious vessels to New York.