

1876.
NEW ZEALAND.

TORRES STRAITS MAIL SERVICE,

(FURTHER PAPERS RELATIVE TO).

(In continuation of Papers presented on 27th September, 1875.)

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

Mr. Fox to the Hon. the ACTING POSTMASTER-GENERAL, New Zealand.

7, Westminster Chambers, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.,

13th August, 1875.

SIR,—

I have been directed by Sir Julius Vogel to forward to you the accompanying copy of a paragraph which was published in the *Times* of Friday, the 6th inst.

Sir Julius Vogel thinks it desirable that a letter in reply or explanation should be published. He suggests that you should cause such a letter, addressed to the Editor of the *Times*, to be prepared; and further, that as it cannot reach England until after his departure for the colony, it should be sent with instructions to the Agent-General, with whom a copy of this letter will be left.

The Hon. the Acting Postmaster-General, New Zealand.

I have, &c.,
E. Fox.

Enclosure in No. 1.

(From the *Times*, 6th August, 1875.)

THE EASTERN TRADE WITH NEW ZEALAND.—The *Straits Times Overland Journal* announces:—“The Hong Kong Postmaster-General has given notice that the New Zealand Post Office officials have refused to receive or forward letters from China to New Zealand, forwarded by the Torres Straits line, and all letters from New Zealand must, therefore, either be addressed to an agent in Sydney, or sent *via* Galle. This is such an extraordinary piece of illiberality and narrow-minded jealousy, as to be almost incredible.”

No. 2.

The Hon. W. H. REYNOLDS to the AGENT-GENERAL.

(Telegraphed from Wellington to Auckland, and there posted for London.)

Wellington, 28th October, 1875.

I FORWARD you by telegraph, letter addressed to the Editor of the *Times*, *re* the Torres Straits Service, concerning which I believe Sir Julius Vogel has communicated with you. I leave it to your discretion to publish the letter, or to make whatever statement or explanation you think best.—WILLIAM H. REYNOLDS.—“New Zealand and the Torres Straits Line.—To the Editor of the *Times*.—Sir,—My attention has been directed to a paragraph appearing in your issue of the 6th August last, copied from the *Straits Times Overland Journal*, and headed ‘The Eastern Trade with New Zealand,’ in which the writer states, that the Hong Kong Postmaster-General had notified that the New Zealand Post Office had refused to receive or forward letters from China to New Zealand by the Torres Straits line, and all letters for New Zealand must therefore be addressed to an agent in Sydney or sent *via* Galle. This statement is not quite correct, and I cannot but think that the notification issued from the Hong Kong Post Office has been incorrectly quoted. The New Zealand Post Office has never refused to receive or forward letters from China forwarded by the Torres Straits line of steamers: this department, however, was unable to acquiesce in a suggestion made in 1874 by the Hong Kong Post Office to the

Postmaster-General of Queensland, to the effect that the China and Japan correspondence for this colony should be forwarded *via* Torres Straits in closed mails to Brisbane. The refusal was not made in any spirit of illiberality, or from any unwillingness to make use of the Torres Straits line, but because, in the absence of direct or regular communication with Queensland, it would be more to the interest of this colony to rely solely upon the Galle Service for the transport of our mails to and from China and Japan. I should like to add that, as a matter of fact, closed mails from certain of the Straits settlements for this colony are regularly delivered by the Torres Straits mail steamers. This fact will at once show that this colony has no desire to prohibit the forwarding of mails by the service *via* Torres Straits.

"I have, &c.,

"WILLIAM H. REYNOLDS,

"Acting Postmaster-General."

The Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

No. 3.

Mr. GRAY to the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Hong Kong.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 5th November, 1875.

By direction of the Acting Postmaster-General, I have the honor to forward you the enclosed copy of a paragraph which was published in the *Times* of the 6th August last, and I have to request that you may be good enough to inform me whether the writer in the *Straits Times Overland Journal* is correct in stating that your office has issued a notice to the effect that this department had refused to receive or forward letters from China to New Zealand forwarded by the Torres Straits line.

If the notice in question has been issued by your department, the Acting Postmaster-General would be glad to be informed under what authority the statement was made that this colony would not receive or forward letters from China forwarded by the Torres Straits line.

I am to add that the refusal attributed to this colony is one which has not been made with the authority of this department.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY,

Secretary.

The Postmaster-General, Hong Kong.

No. 4.

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

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 6th November, 1875.

The attention of the Acting Postmaster-General has been directed to a paragraph which appeared in the *Times* of the 6th August last, copied from the *Straits Times Overland Journal*, commenting upon a notice stated to have been issued by the Postmaster-General at Hong Kong, to the effect that "The Hong Kong Postmaster-General has given notice that the New Zealand Post Office officials have refused to receive or forward letters from China to New Zealand, forwarded by the Torres Straits line."

In forwarding you a copy of the paragraph for your perusal, I am desired to state that this department has not made any such refusal as that attributed to it in the notice issued by the Hong Kong Post Office. I would refer you to my letters of the 21st August and 7th September, 1874, as to the decision of this department in connection with the proposal made by the Postmaster-General, Hong Kong, through your office, to forward by the Torres Straits line of steamers the China and Japan correspondence for this colony; and I should feel obliged if you would favour me with copies of your replies to the Hong Kong Post office, intimating the decision of this department in the matter above referred to.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY,

Secretary.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Brisbane.

No. 5.

Messrs. BETHUNE and HUNTER to the Hon. W. H. REYNOLDS.

SIR,—

Wellington, 17th November, 1875.

We have the honor to send you the enclosed, being copy of a telegram which we received from the manager of the Australasian Steam Navigation Company this forenoon. You will see that he states,—

1. That the Company he represents will be prepared to contract to carry out the proposed mail steam service between Queensland and New Zealand.
2. That he asks for full information respecting the terms and conditions of the contract.
3. That he wishes sufficient time allowed to enable the Company to understand the nature of the service to be performed.

We shall be greatly obliged if you will furnish us with all the information it is in your power to supply, in order that we may be able to write to the Manager of the Australasian Steam Navigation Company by the mail to be despatched from here by the "Albion" on Saturday.

We have, &c.,

The Hon. W. H. Reynolds, Commissioner of Customs
and Postmaster-General, Wellington.

BETHUNE AND HUNTER.

Enclosure in No. 5.

(Telegram.)

SYDNEY, November 10th.—Inform Government Company prepared to carry out proposed steam communication between New Zealand and Brisbane. Obtain fullest particulars, and, if possible, get matter deferred.

AUSTRALASIAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY.

Messrs. Bethune and Hunter, Wellington.

No. 6.

The Hon. Mr. RICHARDSON to Messrs. BETHUNE and HUNTER.

GENTLEMEN,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 19th November, 1875.

I do myself the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 17th instant, enclosing copy of a telegram received by you from the Australasian Steam Navigation Company, in which you are requested to inform the Government that the Company are prepared to carry out a steam service between Brisbane and this colony; and also to obtain full particulars relative to the proposed service, and if possible to have the matter postponed until such time as the Company may have had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the nature and the terms and conditions of the proposed service.

While viewing with pleasure the interest displayed by the Australasian Steam Navigation Company in the matter of establishing steam communication between this colony and that of Queensland, I very much regret that the Government is not in a position at present to afford the Company the desired information. Negotiations with the Eastern and Australian Mail Steam Company (the Contractors for the Torres Straits Mail Service), having for their object the extension of that Company's line of steamers to the ports of Wellington, Lyttelton, and Port Chalmers, are still pending; and until such time as these negotiations are brought to a close the Government would not be in a position to treat with the Australasian Steam Navigation Company.

In order that the position of the Government with the Eastern and Australian Mail Steam Company may be better understood, I beg to enclose you copy of a printed paper laid before Parliament last Session; and I would particularly direct your attention to the correspondence between Sir Julius Vogel and Mr. Tidman, Secretary to the Eastern and Australian Mail Steam Company.

F. 4—1875.

I have, &c.,

Messrs. Bethune and Hunter,
Agents A.S.N. Company, Wellington.

EDWARD RICHARDSON,
(for Postmaster-General).

No. 7.

Messrs. BETHUNE and HUNTER to the Hon. E. RICHARDSON.

SIR,—

Custom House Quay, Wellington, 20th November, 1875.

We have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date, and beg to inform you that we forwarded a copy to the Manager, Australasian Steam Navigation Company, by the s.s. "Albion."

Thanking you for your prompt attention,

We have, &c.,

The Hon. E. Richardson,
Acting Postmaster-General, Wellington.

BETHUNE AND HUNTER.

No. 8.

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

Postmaster-General's Department, Brisbane,
29th November, 1875.

SIR,—

In compliance with the request contained in your communication dated the 6th instant, I am directed to forward herewith copy of the letter addressed by this department to the Postmaster-General, Hong Kong, subsequent to the receipt of your letter declining to acquiesce in

his suggestion that direct closed mails from Hong Kong for New Zealand should be forwarded to Brisbane *via* Torres Straits, owing to the absence of direct or reliable communication between New Zealand and Queensland.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
JOHN McDONALD.

Enclosure in No. 8.

Mr. McDONALD to the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Hong Kong.

Postmaster-General's Department, Brisbane,

7th October, 1875.

SIR,—

With further reference to your letter dated 3rd January, No. 4, enquiring whether there is any objection to your enclosing closed mails containing correspondence from China and Japan for the Australian colonies and New Zealand in the mails for Brisbane despatched *via* Torres Straits, I am directed to inform you that the various colonies have been communicated with on the subject, and that the following replies have been received :—

From Wellington, stating "that, in consequence of there not being any direct or reliable communication between New Zealand and Brisbane, the Postmaster-General is of opinion that it would be inadvisable to acquiesce in the proposal made by the Postmaster-General, Hong Kong."

From Sydney, stating "that it is considered desirable that correspondence for New South Wales from China and Japan should be forwarded to Sydney by the route referred to;" and

From Melbourne, stating "that the postal authorities of China and Japan have been requested to forward *via* Torres Straits all letters, &c., that may be especially addressed for transmission by that route."

In reference to the above subject, I am to refer you to my letter of the 18th ultimo, stating that mails should be forwarded loose for the other colonies, as delays frequently occur when they are enclosed in the mails for Brisbane.

I have, &c.,
JOHN McDONALD,
Under Secretary.

The Postmaster-General, Hong Kong.

No. 9.

Mr. LISTER to the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington.

General Post Office, Hong Kong, 24th January, 1876.

SIR,—

In reply to your letter of the 5th November, 1875, I have the honor to enclose copies of the notice referred to, and of such portions of a letter* from the Brisbane office as in any way refer to New Zealand.

You will observe that my notice says nothing about the forwarding of letters from your department.

I very much regret that any issue from this Post Office should form the basis of an intemperate newspaper attack upon your administration. I think you will however agree with me that, on the information I possessed, the notice seemed justified. It was found that each mail more and more letters were received directed to New Zealand *via* Torres Straits, and it was desirable to acquaint the community with what was supposed to be the facts.

The attention of the Brisbane Office has some time since been called to the anomaly of shutting out the Hong Kong public from communication with New Zealand by a route which is open to the Singapore Post Office by convention.

I have only to add that if I can in any way meet the views of your office, I shall be most happy to do so. I feel bound, however, to let matters stand as they are until I receive a definite expression of your wishes as to the Torres Straits route, and I shall be glad to know at your earliest convenience to which Australian office you would desire the New Zealand mails to be enclosed.

I have, &c.,
ALFRED LISTER,
Postmaster-General.

The Postmaster-General, Wellington.

Enclosure in No. 9.

POST OFFICE NOTICE.

Correspondence for New Zealand via Torres Straits.

A CONSIDERABLE amount of correspondence being received directed to New Zealand *via* Torres Straits, it is notified that the New Zealand Post Office has declined to receive mails by that route; hence there is no alternative but to forward such correspondence *via* Galle.

* *Vide* Enclosure in No. 7.

Persons who are anxious to avail themselves of the Torres Straits steamers to communicate with New Zealand, should address their letters, &c., to the care of an agent at Sydney.

ALFRED LISTER,

Acting Postmaster-General.

General Post Office, Hong Kong, 20th May, 1875.

No. 10.

The AGENT-GENERAL for New Zealand to the Hon. W. H. REYNOLDS.

7, Westminster Chambers, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.,

23rd December, 1875.

SIR,—

I have the honor to inform you that I have forwarded to your address, per book post by the present mail, four copies of the *Times* newspaper of the 22nd instant, which contains your letter on the Torres Straits Mail Service, inserted at my request, in conformity with the wishes expressed in your telegram on the subject received by the San Francisco mail on the 13th instant.

I have, &c.,

I. E. FEATHERSTON,

Agent-General.

The Hon. W. H. Reynolds, Wellington.

No. 11.

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

SIR,—

Postmaster-General's Department, Brisbane, 29th March, 1876.

I am directed to call your attention to the foot-note* to the accompanying Hong Kong time table, notifying that correspondence for New Zealand cannot be sent *via* Torres Straits, and to request that as your colony was duly provided for in the convention between Queensland and Singapore, such action may be taken as will prevent the publishing of the notice referred to.

I have, &c.,

JOHN McDONALD.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

No. 12.

Mr. GRAY to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Hong Kong.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 10th July, 1876.

I have been directed by the Postmaster-General to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 24th January last, in reply to mine of the 5th November, 1875, in which you inform this office of the action taken by your department in the matter of the non-transmission of correspondence for this colony by the Torres Straits line of steamers.

2. I am directed to state that it is a matter for regret that, through the absence of precise instructions from this department, there should have been any misapprehension as to the intentions of this colony with regard to the transmission of correspondence from your office for New Zealand by the Torres Straits route. The decision of this department on the proposal made by you to the Postmaster-General of Queensland in your letter of the 3rd January, 1874, was not intended to preclude your forwarding specially marked correspondence; and it is regretted that the reply from this office was not in more precise terms.

3. I have now the honor to request that you will be good enough for the future to forward by the Torres Straits line of steamers all correspondence which you think it desirable to forward by those steamers. The Postmaster-General will be glad if you will give the necessary public notification.

4. A copy of this letter has been forwarded to the General Post Office, Brisbane, for the information of the postal authorities there.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY,

Secretary.

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Hong Kong.

No. 13.

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

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 10th July, 1876.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, of the 29th March last, calling attention to the fact that the Hong Kong Post Office had notified, at the foot of a time table issued by that office, that "Correspondence for New Zealand cannot be sent *via* Torres Straits," and requesting that such steps may be taken by this department as would prevent the publishing of the notice in question.

* Correspondence for New Zealand cannot be sent *via* Torres Straits.

2. In reply, I am directed by the Postmaster-General to inform you that a communication has been addressed to the Hong Kong Post Office, in which the Postmaster-General of that colony is requested, for the future, to forward by the Torres Straits line of steamers any correspondence for this colony that he thinks should be forwarded by that route. I enclose, for your information, copy of the letter in question.

3. I have been requested to point out that the decision of this department conveyed to you in my letter of the 21st August, 1874, was not intended to create the impression that this colony refused to make use of the Torres Straits Service. By the statement that this department was unable to acquiesce in the suggestion of the Hong Kong Post Office, it was not desired to preclude the forwarding of specially addressed correspondence in mails by the Torres Straits steamers; and I am directed to express regret that there should have been any misapprehension as to the real intentions of this department: and I should add that, although the suggestion of the Hong Kong Post Office was not adopted, it was not anticipated that the action of this department would interfere with the due forwarding of specially marked correspondence.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY,

Secretary.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Brisbane.

By Authority: GEORGE DIDSBURY, Government Printer, Wellington, N.Z.

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