

No. 24.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the PREMIER, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

London, 10th March, 1888.

FRISCO.—English Government will carry mails for us as at present until November, 1889.
To the Premier, New Zealand.

No. 25.

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

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 19th March, 1888.

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of my cablegram to you of the 13th instant, conveying the information that the Imperial Post Office had consented to continue the existing arrangements for the carriage of the colonial mails between London and San Francisco and for the division of postage until November, 1889. May I again remind you that the Postmaster-General is exceedingly anxious to obtain the approval of your Government to the proposed twelve months' extension of the San Francisco mail-service contract. I have, &c.,

The Secretary, General Post Office, Sydney.

W. GRAY, Secretary.

Enclosure in No. 25.

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

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 13th March, 1888.

FRISCO Service.—Agent-General cables that Imperial Post Office agrees continue existing postal arrangements until November, 1889. This covers the proposed twelve months' renewal of contract. Postmaster-General anxious obtain approval your Government to renewal.

Secretary, Post Office, Sydney.

W. GRAY.

No. 26.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 18th February, 1888.

I took the opportunity of having a long conference privately with Sir Arthur Blackwood on the questions of continuing a Pacific mail-service and the apportionment of postage before addressing the Imperial Post Office officially. I now beg to enclose copies of the letters I have sent in since.

In your letter of the 30th December* you desire me to appeal to the Colonial Office; but I have thought best for the present to confine my representations to the Post Office, because it is the Imperial Treasury that will really decide the particular question we want to get settled, and it would not expedite the matter by appearing to appeal from one department to another, especially as whatever difficulty there is does not proceed from the Post Office. * * *

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Wellington.

F. D. BELL.

Enclosure 1 in No. 26.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the SECRETARY, GENERAL POST OFFICE, London.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 16th February, 1888.

I have received a despatch from the Postmaster-General of New Zealand, informing me of his wish to change the London day of despatching the mails *via* San Francisco from Wednesdays to Saturdays, so as to secure that those mails should cross the Atlantic in the "Etruria" or "Umbria," or other equally fast steamships. Faster mail trains have recently been put on in the United States, timed to run through between New York and San Francisco in five days two hours, which admits of the Pacific Ocean steamers leaving San Francisco on Wednesday night or early Thursday morning in place of Friday or Saturday. This means a saving of about two days there, and the New Zealand Post Office is informed that a further saving of perhaps as much as three days could be made by changing the London mail day from Wednesday to Saturday.

The New Zealand Office is aware that Saturday is not regarded as a convenient day for closing the mails in London; but seeing that so much would be gained by a Saturday despatch, my Government would be disposed to make the change, provided it were certain that the mails would be forwarded regularly by such steamers as the "Etruria" and "Umbria." May I, therefore, ask whether there would be any insuperable objection to the proposed change, and whether (supposing the change to be made) the mails would be sure to go by such ships as I have mentioned. In that case, I should wish to cable to my Government specifying the earliest date on which the change could conveniently be made by the Imperial Post Office. I have, &c.,

The Secretary, General Post Office, London.

F. D. BELL.