

Buckland, and you will be informed of the result by cable. Major Atkinson has not been able to consider the letter from the Postmaster-General of the United States, nor will he be able to do so until after the prorogation of Parliament.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Sydney.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY, Secretary.

No. 44.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. BUCKLAND.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 30th December, 1887.

I have the honour to acknowledge, with thanks, your letter of the 14th ultimo, forwarding a copy of your cable-message despatched on the 9th idem, relative to shortening the time occupied in the overland journey from New York to San Francisco.

After conferring with the Union Steamship Company, it has been decided not to dispatch the steamers from Auckland on Tuesday morning, as suggested, as owing to the Manukau being a bar harbour the southern mails could not always be delivered at Auckland on Tuesday morning in time for the despatch of the mail steamer bound to San Francisco. Practically, these mails would need to be in Auckland the previous afternoon, and as an 8 a.m. departure would make the steamer due at San Francisco four hours after the fast Sunday morning train for New York had left, it has been determined not to force on the contractors any obligation to deliver the mails within contract time.

I now enclose a copy of the time-table, as officially amended, giving effect to the foregoing decision.

I have read with great interest the newspaper clipping "Fast Overland Trains." I hope that this fast railway service will really be the means of shortening the time; but as the "Mariposa" did not sail until Saturday the change has not been initiated promisingly. It may be, however, that the delay was on the Atlantic and not on the railway.

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C. R. Buckland, Esq.,
Acting Resident Agent for New Zealand, San Francisco.

I have, &c.,
W. GRAY, Secretary.

No. 45.

The Hon. Major ATKINSON to the Hon. Sir HENRY PARKES, Sydney.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 19th December, 1887.

FRISCO service.—I intended asking House for authority to negotiate, in conjunction with your Government, for renewal service for a term of years, subject Parliament approval. Pressure of other business and desire to prorogue before Christmas makes this impossible. Now propose ask for power to extend existing contract for twelve months. If your Government concur shall be obliged if you will reply to-morrow, as question must be brought before House immediately.

Sir Henry Parkes, Sydney.

H. A. ATKINSON.

No. 46.

Mr. GRAY to the MANAGING DIRECTOR, Union Steamship Company of New Zealand (Limited), Dunedin.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 23rd December, 1887.

HOUSE empowered Government to extend present FRISCO contract for twelve months. Please say if your company willing extend contract on existing basis.

James Mills, Esq., Union Company, Dunedin.

W. GRAY.

No. 47.

The Hon. Major ATKINSON to the Hon. the PREMIER, Sydney.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 24th December, 1887.

PARLIAMENT has authorised Government extend FRISCO service for twelve months, so as to give ample time for considering question of renewal. Propose at once to communicate with contractors, and shall be glad to learn that your Government concurs in extending contract.

The Hon. the Premier, Sydney.

H. A. ATKINSON.

No. 48.

Mr. JAMES MILLS to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

Dunedin, 29th December, 1887.

Re your telegram of 23rd I am in communication with Oceanic Steam Company, who are associated with us in the contract, and I have no doubt we shall be able to arrange for extension for one year as proposed.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

JAMES MILLS.