

there connecting with the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Grand Trunk, and other systems. It is proposed to further provide a service of three twin-screw steamers, of not less than sixteen knots an hour at sea, between British Columbia and the Australasian Colonies. The seven vessels are to be specially designed as fast armed cruisers and transport ships, and to be built under the supervision of the Admiralty, special attention to be given to the twin-screw engines and elaborate subdivision. They will be fully provided with all the necessary gun platforms and fittings, and manned as far as practicable by crews of the Royal Naval Reserve.

For the Atlantic service a subsidy has already been secured from the Canadian Government. A small subsidy has been secured, also from the same source, for the Australasian service. In connection with the Canadian Pacific Railway it is proposed to guarantee through time between London and Australia not to exceed thirty-five days—the same as between London and Adelaide *via* Brindisi. The through transit would frequently be made in thirty-one to thirty-two days. At Halifax, Quebec, Vancouver, &c., the steamers will land passengers alongside the trains, thus avoiding any difficulty and expense of cabs, hotels, and transfer. Through rates will be made between London and various points in Australasia, allowing stop-over privileges, and covering all charges by ocean and rail. It is also proposed to check baggage through, following the system now in practice in the United States and Canada.

The accommodation in the Australasian vessels would be of the best possible description, and they would be manned by European officers and crews. They would perform the passage across the Pacific in from eighteen to twenty days, and in the event of emergency could reach Australia (Moreton Bay) from Vancouver in sixteen days. At Vancouver, the steamers will, at a comparatively small expense, always be within immediate reach of London and Europe by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company's telegraph system.

Direct connection, both by sea and rail, will be made with San Francisco, and also with Seattle and Tacoma, the termini of the Northern Pacific, Union Pacific, and Great Northern Railway systems. By means of the latter, and of the Canadian Pacific Railway, there is direct communication with all points in the United States and Canada. It is thought that a large trade may, in time, be developed outward from Canada of all kinds of manufactured goods, canned salmon, fruit and vegetables, fresh fruit, butter, eggs, &c., also large consignments of lumber. The return cargoes would consist of wool, tin, sugar, fruits, &c.

Passengers from the Australasian Colonies would be enabled to reach Europe in about thirty-two days, as against, say, forty days by the Gibraltar-Suez route, and without increase of expense. An alternative route will be provided, which will avoid the heat and discomfort of the voyage through the Red Sea and Suez Canal, and will offer a smooth and pleasant passage across the Southern Pacific, a railway journey across the best equipped line in America, and the fastest possible Atlantic crossing, about equal in point of time to that between Gibraltar and London.

The total additional subsidy to that given by Canada required to insure the establishment of the proposed new company is £80,000, which it is hoped will be furnished by the Imperial and Colonial Governments. The present rate of subvention to armed cruiser ships is 15s. per gross ton per annum, and at this rate the seven vessels of the company would be entitled to £33,000 per annum. It is understood that by a reduction in the postal rates some £10,000 per annum will be saved upon the New York-San Francisco service, which amount could be applied to this British service. The Australian service would be made fortnightly at the earliest opportunity.

It is thought that the establishment of this great line will materially conduce to the promotion of a closer relationship between Great Britain and Canada, Great Britain and Australasia, and Canada and Australasia, and that the total sum asked for—namely £80,000—will not be considered an excessive one.

### No. 137.

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

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 17th February, 1891.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 11th and 24th December, upon the question of the Vancouver service: the latter reporting the meeting of the Agents-General with the High Commissioner for Canada on the 16th idem, and enclosing the prospectus of the Imperial Steam Navigation Company, which is intended to provide fast services between the United Kingdom and Canada, and between Vancouver and the Australian Colonies. This question will no doubt be considered at the Postal Conference which is to be held at Sydney on the 26th instant, and at which New Zealand will be represented.

I have, &c.,

A. J. CADMAN,

For the Postmaster-General.

Sir F. D. Bell, K.C.M.G., C.B., Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

### No. 138.

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

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 21st February, 1891.

INQUIRE Imperial Post Office prospects early construction Pacific cable; establishing Vancouver service calling New Zealand. Urgently reply, for Conference proceedings.

### No. 139.

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

(Telegram.)

London, 23rd February, 1891.

VANCOUVER.—No proposals before Imperial Post Office at present with reference to either mail-service or cable.