

In reply to your inquiry, I have to inform you that the San Francisco mail-service contract extends to November, 1897.

James Huddart, Esq., 22, Billiter Street, E.C.

Yours, &c.,

WALTER KENNAWAY, Secretary.

No. 46.

The DEPUTY POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Sydney, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.
Postal and Electric Telegraph Department, General Post Office,

SIR,—

Sydney, 21st November, 1896.

I am directed to forward, for the information of the Postmaster-General of New Zealand, the enclosed copy of a communication received from Mr. Robert Grayson, representative of Mr. James Huddart, of the Canadian-Australian Steamship line, together with copies of two suggested time-tables in connection with the Canadian-Australian mail-service, one providing for the steamers of the line calling at Wellington and the other for their calling at Auckland.

I am also to state that the Postmaster-General of this colony has no objection to the adoption of one or other of the proposals, and considers that an effort should be made to secure such a great point as that involved.

I have, &c.,

S. H. LAMBTON,

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

Deputy Postmaster-General.

Enclosure 1 in No. 46.

MR. ROBERT GRAYSON (representing Mr. James Huddart) to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Sydney.

SIR,—

Sydney, 14th November, 1896.

Referring to the conversation which I had the honour to have with you some days ago with reference to the proposed new time-table for the Canadian-Australian Steamship line, I now beg to enclose you herewith two suggested time-tables—one, marked "A," providing for the steamships going *via* Wellington, and the other, marked "B," providing for the steamships going *via* Auckland.

I may say that, in connection with the port in New Zealand at which the steamships shall call, the understanding with the New Zealand Government was that the matter was to be left to the steamship company, and in this connection I may say that nothing definite has been, so far, decided.

Referring to the time-table marked "A," you will note that this provides for the steamships leaving Sydney on Saturdays at 1 p.m.—that is, allowing for the time of receipt of the Melbourne mail. If you follow the time-table through you will see that in sailing from Sydney on the Saturday it obviates our arriving at or departing from any intermediate ports on a Sunday. It also provides for arriving at Vancouver on a Thursday, which enables connection to be made with the fast New York steamships on the following Wednesday. We may say that in drawing up this time-table we have endeavoured to make the best connection possible on every occasion. The time-table as drawn up allows for performing the service from Wellington, New Zealand, equal to the present average service of the San Francisco line, which is thirty-three days from Auckland, and thirty-five days from Wellington. In this connection, however, it is, of course, necessary to point out that our route across the Pacific is more lengthy, and until such time as the fast Canadian-Atlantic service is established we are also at a disadvantage. However, as I have just mentioned, in spite of this, the suggested time-table we send you provides for landing the mails in London from New Zealand in equal time to the San Francisco service.

An important point to which I have the honour to direct your attention is that under the time-table now proposed the stay of the steamships in Vancouver amounts to eleven days and in Sydney to twenty days. The reason of this, you will readily understand, is that Sydney being our terminal port, where all our coal-supplies are obtained, stores purchased, repairs effected, &c., it is essential that full advantage shall be taken to give the extra time available to the Port of Sydney. In considering the question of alternating with the San Francisco line, which, of course, it is the desire of both your Government and the Government of New Zealand that we should do, for mail and trade purposes, we have to face the fact that the present time-table of the San Francisco line allows for a detention of thirteen days and twenty days in Sydney and San Francisco respectively.

In order to adjust this, therefore, and have the sailings to alternate, it would be necessary for the present San Francisco steamers to reverse their practice, and give themselves thirteen days in San Francisco and twenty days in Sydney. Seeing that the present San Francisco contract is with the Government of New Zealand, I shall be glad if you will be good enough to represent this matter to the Postmaster-General of New Zealand, in order that he may take into his consideration the question of so arranging the San Francisco time-table as to permit of the two services alternating. I apprehend that, in view of the importance of the question to your Government, no objection would be taken by New Zealand to this.

As I think it likely that the time-table will require discussion and explanation, I beg to say that I shall be happy to call upon you at any moment you may desire in connection therewith.

The work at the R.M.S. "Aorangi" is being pushed forward, and it is desirable that a time-table shall be approved as early as possible.

If it were possible that this matter could be taken up with the Postmaster-General of New Zealand by the next outgoing New Zealand mail, leaving on Wednesday, 18th instant, I should feel extremely obliged.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT GRAYSON,

Representing James Huddart.

The Hon. J. Cook, M.L.A., Postmaster-General, Sydney.