

No. 55.

The DEPUTY POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Ottawa, to the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington.

Post Office Department, Canada,

Ottawa, 2nd April, 1897.

SIR,—

I have the honour to acknowledge your letter of the 18th February last, stating that it is proposed to establish an exchange of mails between New Zealand and Great Britain by way of Canada, and asking for certain information bearing thereon.

In reply to your inquiries, I beg leave to say,—

(1.) That the Canadian territorial transit rate is 2 francs per kilogram for letters and post-cards and 25 centimes per kilogram for other matter.

(2.) Your mails for Great Britain would be forwarded by way of New York whenever there would be a gain in time by doing so. This would involve a further territorial transit charge equal to the Canadian. No special arrangement with the United States Post Office would be necessary.

(3.) On arrival at Vancouver, mails for Great Britain are immediately placed on board the Canadian Pacific Railway train going east, in charge of an officer of the Canadian Post Office, and when intended for transmission *via* New York are transferred to other trains, either at Moose Jaw (Pasqua Junction), Winnipeg, or Montreal, according to circumstances.

(4.) The train from Vancouver leaves at 2 p.m., and arrives at Pasqua Junction 50 hours after; at Winnipeg, 66 hours 30 minutes after; at Montreal, 121 hours 45 minutes after; at Quebec, 132 hours 30 minutes after; at Halifax, 146 hours 10 minutes after.

(5.) The steamers under contract with the Canadian Government sail from Quebec weekly in summer, and Halifax weekly in winter.

(6.) The ordinary running-time between Montreal and New York is fourteen or fifteen hours.

In conclusion, I have to express regret that I am not able at present to communicate to you the stipulations for the proposed fast service between Canada and Great Britain.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM WHITE,

Deputy Postmaster-General.

The Postmaster-General, Wellington, New Zealand.

No. 56.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to the DEPUTY POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Ottawa.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 13th May, 1897.

I have the honour, by direction, to acknowledge the receipt of and to thank you for your letter of the 2nd ultimo, forwarding information in respect of the transport of mails between Vancouver and Great Britain.

I have, &c.,

The Deputy Postmaster-General, Ottawa, Canada.

W. GRAY, Secretary.

No. 57.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the PREMIER.

Westminster Chambers, 13, Victoria Street, London, S.W.,

8th April, 1897.

SIR,—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 16th February last, relative to the Vancouver mail-service to New Zealand, and in reference thereto to inform you that, in accordance with your instructions, I have placed myself in communication with the Imperial postal authorities, and with the High Commissioner for Canada, with the view of obtaining the information which you have desired me to procure.

I venture to point out, however, that, on approaching the Imperial Government with respect to a subsidy, I am under the disadvantage of not being able to give fuller particulars as regards the proposed service, and the intentions of the New Zealand Government in reference thereto.

It is true that I have the provisional agreement made with Messrs. Huddart in 1895, but I have no authority to state that the Government are prepared to adopt its provisions. Nor am I able to give very definitely the intentions of the Government as regards the San Francisco service.

Judging from previous experience, the Imperial Government are not favourably inclined towards the Pacific mail-route, their inclination apparently being as far as possible to avail themselves of the Federal or Suez mail-service.

It would therefore be important that in negotiating with the Imperial Government I should be supplied as soon as possible with definite particulars of the conditions under which the Government propose that the two Pacific services shall be established as regards route, amount of subsidy, time between New Zealand and England, &c. In order to obtain the most favourable consideration of the Imperial Government of the proposals it is important that this information should be as complete as possible.

As regards the Vancouver service, it is at present supported by subsidies from Canada, New South Wales, and Fiji, and is being carried on without any help from the Imperial Government, so that the prospects of obtaining a subsidy for extending the service to New Zealand is somewhat uncertain, more especially now that the colony belongs to the Postal Union.

I have, &c.,

W. P. REEVES.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.