

1898.
NEW ZEALAND.

EXTENSION OF COMMERCE COMMITTEE

(REPORT OF THE) ON THE SAN FRANCISCO AND VANCOUVER MAIL-SERVICES, TOGETHER
WITH THE MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

(MR. McNAB, CHAIRMAN.)

Report brought up on 3rd November, 1898, and ordered to be printed.

ORDER OF REFERENCE.

Extract from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

FRIDAY, THE 30TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 1898.

Ordered, "That it be an instruction to the Extension of Commerce Committee to inquire into the recent delays in the forwarding of the San Francisco mail from Auckland; and also to inquire into the time-table for that service, with the object of obtaining such a revision as will enable correspondents in the southern portion of the colony to reply by the outgoing mail in the same way as the Auckland residents are now enabled to do."—(MR. SMITH.)

REPORT.

YOUR Committee expresses its regret that it has not been able to more fully and at an earlier date examine into the question of the San Francisco service as remitted to it for consideration on the 30th September, 1898, but being occupied with subjects previously placed before it, and from the difficulty through so many of its members being engaged on other Committees, there has been unavoidable delay in getting meetings to deal with the business of this Committee.

MAIL DELAYS.

In reference to the recent recurring delays of the San Francisco mails between Auckland and Wellington, this seems to have been due to some dilatoriness, but mainly to the difficulties attendant on two tidal harbours and the Manukau Bar. These conditions necessitate the employment of steamers with a combination of shallow draft and considerable power—conditions difficult to combine, and fulfilled by neither of the steamers employed.

TIME-TABLE.

With the exception of Auckland and, with a narrow margin, at Wellington, opportunity for reply is not afforded by the return San Francisco mail, and, as the demands for this for the whole colony is reasonable, your Committee has taken evidence as far as available. To enable opportunity for reply to inward correspondence as far south as Invercargill would necessitate an interval at Auckland between arrival and departure of eight days, instead of four as at present, and this could only be attained by the substitution of steamers making the passage in seventeen, as against nineteen days under the present contract. If the service is to be the success as a passenger line, which it ought to be, between Australia, New Zealand, and America steamers with the speed contemplated would appear to be necessary, and, since the service is so largely subsidised by the United States of America, your Committee thinks the matter should be arranged by negotiation rather than by calling for tenders, and recommends that negotiations be entered upon with a view to a contract for say, seven years, a term which would be necessary to induce steamship-owners to procure the class of vessels necessary. Arrangements would also be required to permit of the employment of such British steamers as are engaged therewith between Honolulu and San Francisco.

VANCOUVER SERVICE.

This alternate line has to be considered in connection with the San Francisco service. While the steamers engaged have carried large cargoes and a fair proportion of passengers, yet the service is necessarily some three days longer, and, even with that margin, it has not always succeeded in being punctual. It seems also doubtful whether this service will be long continued, and in the event of its cessation, and a fortnightly service being still considered necessary, such a service to San Francisco could then be carried out by the employment of five steamers instead of six, as is now engaged in the two services.

COASTAL SERVICE.

The coastal distribution and collection of mails might be improved by the adoption or partial adoption of the recommendations of the Report on the Wellington-Lyttelton steam-service. By the arrival of the Invercargill mail at Dunedin overnight and its despatch so that the steamer might leave Lyttelton by 5 or 5.30, such a steamer as the "Rotomahana" could reach Wellington with the mails to be forwarded by train at, say, 8 a.m., arriving at Auckland the following morning. A return southward connection on the same lines is equally desirable.

Such a service would reduce the difficulties and expenses incurred over distribution of the English and American mails by express trains and otherwise.

Again, in the event of a discontinuance of the Vancouver service and substitution of a fortnightly service to San Francisco, and by the arrival of every alternate steamer at Wellington as the first port of call, twelve hours—both inwards and outwards—would be saved to all southern portions of the colony. Although Auckland would thus be placed at a disadvantage, yet, as by far the larger portion of population would benefit, your Committee recommends this course for such alternate service.

2nd November, 1898.

ROBERT McNAB, Chairman.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

THURSDAY, 27TH OCTOBER, 1898.—(Mr. McNAB, Chairman.)

Mr. W. GRAY, Secretary of the Post and Telegraph Department, examined.

1. *The Chairman*: Have you any evidence to give the Committee on the subject of the delays taking place in the forwarding of the mails from Auckland southwards; and will you make any suggestions as to how matters can be improved?—The first delay under discussion occurred in July last. The Manukau steamer with the southern mails was delayed at New Plymouth on account of the state of the tide. She arrived there late on the ebb-tide, touched on the way in, and was detained from about 2 a.m. till 8 a.m., with the result that, in the place of reaching here at 5 p.m., she did not arrive until after 11 p.m. The following month there was another delay, also owing to the state of the tide at New Plymouth. The succeeding steamer left San Francisco a day late, and it was assumed she would arrive a day late at Auckland, but she made an exceptionally fast run, and arrived on the Tuesday, time-table date. The "Takapuna" had left the Manukau the previous day, and the mails were sent on by the "Glenelg," which made an average trip to New Plymouth. She had, however, to wait outside about a couple of hours on account of the tide; but her mails, as well as the two previous mails, arrived here on Wednesday night.

2. It would be as well to deal with them separately. Have you any information to give to the Committee regarding the question of reducing the time-table of the service so as to enable the southern correspondents to reply by the outgoing mail, and obtain the same privileges as the Auckland people?—In a memorandum sent you I have sketched how this might be done—that with a 15-knot service it might be possible to give Dunedin a clear day and Invercargill about six hours for replies. This, however, would be running it very close, and were the mails a day late in arriving at Auckland, Invercargill would not be able to reply.

3. Have any delays taken place in delivering the Vancouver mail on its arrival here in Wellington?—A delay to the southern mails took place in August. The mail-steamer arrived here about 6 a.m., and the southern portion did not leave till 11 p.m. A steamer was to have left in the afternoon, but owing to boisterous weather on the West Coast she did not arrive here in time. The "Penguin," with the southern mails, met with a strong southerly gale, which delayed her arrival at Lyttelton, with the result that the Dunedin mails, instead of arriving early in the morning, were not delivered until nearly midday.

4. You have prepared a time-table to enable northern correspondents to reply by way of Vancouver?—Yes; but this really means a 16-knot service.

5. *Mr. Duthie*.] I have the papers that you sent in for me. Could you get a scheme prepared similar to what the Railway Department put before the Wellington-Lyttelton Steam-service Committee, where, by means of a diagram, they showed the different services proposed, enabling members at a glance to see what could be done by one and what by the other. Mr. Ronayne got a diagram of that sort prepared?—I should think that could be done if it is only a question of showing the lines.

6. And giving the dates opposite to them?—You mean the plan should be based on the figures I have given.

7. Yes?—Yes, that could be done.

8. I understand the wish of the House is to make the most of the mail-services for the benefit of the whole colony. In the meantime we have a fortnightly service, and it is the opinion that, by

increasing the speed somewhat, we can give the people in the whole colony a better opportunity of making a prompt reply. I think you can manage with a day later with the arrival of the Homeward mail at San Francisco without inconvenience. You now reach San Francisco to catch the German steamer on Tuesdays. If you only get there on the following day you catch the White Star steamer on the Wednesday. That is a day there you can have?—Yes; fourteen days are allowed between San Francisco and London.

9. That is so, but will you put the position more clearly before us? And we also want the comparison as between Auckland and Wellington. You can get mails later from the South to catch boats at Wellington than if they go on to Auckland. I think that will be made clear by your drawings?—Yes.

10. And we could have from you, as head of the department, a statement of what you can recommend from your experience?—Do you not think that ought to be from the Minister?—It appears to me a question of policy.

11. That is as you please?—The question as to whether a 15-knot or a 16-knot service should be recommended, I think, is a matter for the Minister.

12. Your opinion depends on the Minister's?—No, I would still have my opinion.

13. Have you any opinion about better-class steamers?—Yes, I can give you my opinion.

14. *Mr. McLean*: How often has the Frisco mail been late at Auckland?—Two or three times, I think, since April last—arriving on Wednesday instead of Tuesday.

15. What boats were they?—I do not remember. It was, however, no fault of the steamers; the mails were late in reaching San Francisco. Moreover, the contract gives a margin of forty-eight hours in the delivery at Auckland.

16. How often have the fines been imposed?—Twice, I think, within the last four or five years.

17. Only twice?—Yes, only twice.

18. I have frequently noticed, with respect to the outgoing mail, that the direct and the Frisco steamer go out at the same time. What is the object of the two mails going out together?—We cannot avoid that.

19. Could it not be arranged that the Frisco should go out, say, on the 1st January, and the other boat, say, on the 15th?—No; that is a matter for the shipping companies, whom we do not control. They have dates of their own, and frame time-tables without regard to our arrangements, and we, of course, do not consider the shipping companies' sailings. As regards the Vancouver service time-table, it provides for connecting with the New York fast boats.

20. As regards the mail to Napier, do not they compare rather unfavourably in point of time, considering the distance from Auckland, with other places?—No, I think not.

21. For instance, I notice the Frisco mail often arrives at Auckland just after the steamer going down the East Coast has left, and on their going down the West Coast they come on to Wellington as a rule?—No; they are generally landed at New Plymouth, and transferred at Palmerston North. Frequently they are sent by special from Palmerston to Dannevirke to catch the morning train from there, so as to reach Napier about midday, instead of by the through train arriving in the evening.

22. Which place gets its mails first, Wellington or Napier?—Wellington.

23. Although it is two hundred miles further?—No, the distance is not further.

24. On the whole, since this Frisco line has been established it has been regular?—It has been fairly regular. It is not, of course, to be expected that the mails, as a rule, should be forwarded by special trains. As already stated, the Napier portions of the San Francisco mails are sent from Auckland by the East Coast steamers whenever they suit.

25. I mean you find, as regards the English mail, it has been generally pretty regular all through the service?—Yes.

26. Of course, with regard to the other mails, you have no control?—No, we have none, except where there is a subsidised service.

27. *Mr. Buchanan*.] By the communication you made to the Committee I understood that six hours would be the limit for reply from Invercargill?—Yes, about six hours.

28. That would contemplate no detention or interruption whatever from bad weather, or any other cause?—No. The mail on arriving at Dunedin would be sent on by special train to Invercargill, and arrive about 4 o'clock in the morning. That afternoon the return mail would be sent to Clinton to connect at Dunedin next day with the express for Christchurch.

29. Supposing you had a special from New Plymouth, and had it ready there to receive the mails and take them right through, could not you save time?—Not always; it would depend when the mails arrive there. About fourteen hours have been allowed between New Plymouth and Wellington for delivery by steamer. But if, in addition to the expense of bringing the mails by steamer to New Plymouth, you are on every occasion to provide special trains that would materially add to the cost.

30. Putting the question of expense on one side, would you not, as a matter of fact, be able to give the Invercargill people more than six hours if you had a special train from New Plymouth to Wellington?—You could get more than six hours by sending a special from Invercargill.

31. *The Chairman*.] To Clinton?—To Dunedin, or even to Clinton. The special need not leave Invercargill until about midnight.

32. *Mr. Buchanan*.] So that one way or the other you could considerably better your six hours' limit for Invercargill?—Yes.

33. As head of the department, and taking into account the importance of the mail to business-people, would you not recommend the extra expense being incurred?—With Invercargill only?

34. Including Invercargill; but also, of course, there would be an accelerated service generally which would entail money being spent?—The sketch time-table of mine provides for a reasonable delivery at a minimum cost.

35. Taking your experience of detentions from various causes as between Auckland and Lyttelton, how often in the year would you expect detention—delaying the mails for a few hours, say, from tides, or “southerly busters,” and so on?—Well, I should say perhaps three or four times a year.

36. Three or four times out of twelve?—Out of thirteen. This does not apply to the service between here and the Manukau.

37. Mr. McLean suggests, could you give the Committee the difference in cost for the lines as between the Frisco and Vancouver on the one side, and Brindisi and other Australian mail routes on the other?—Yes.

38. Mr. McLean.] The net cost to the colony?—Yes. I have the information, and can refer to it.

Mr. JAMES MILLS, Managing Director of the Union Steamship Company, examined.

The Chairman read the questions on the Order Paper to the witness.

39. Mr. Duthie.] In this matter what I would like you to do (which is entirely voluntary on your part) would be for you to make a sort of sketch time-table, so as to show what would be necessary to be able to give a clear day at Invercargill between the arrival of the mail from San Francisco till it would leave again outwards: to allow that margin of time to show what would be required: and also an alternative between Auckland and Wellington as ports of call for distribution of the mails?—The speed required under the present contract for a nineteen-days service is an average of thirteen knots and a half. There is now an interval of four days between the arrival of the inward mail at Auckland and the departure of the outward mail. To enable correspondence to reach Invercargill and to give a reasonable time for reply by the outgoing mail would require an interval of at least eight days.

40. One day could be gained by delaying the departure of the San Francisco boat with the homeward mail. She would catch the White Star steamer for New York on Wednesday, whereas you now catch the German steamer on Tuesday?—We have now four days, and we require eight days. To gain these four additional days we need to accelerate the passage to and from San Francisco two days each way, which would involve the steamers maintaining a speed of fifteen knots all the way. To do this they must be capable of a good deal more, because you have sometimes persistent adverse weather the whole way between New Zealand and San Francisco, and to maintain a speed of fifteen knots under such circumstances requires a large reserve power.

41. What is in the minds of members of the House is, that a longer contract should be given to get the necessary class of steamers to accomplish this. You know that the passengers carried by way of the San Francisco route are not so numerous as what they might be if boats that were more equal to the Peninsular and Oriental and Orient liners were put on, and that a larger traffic would be developed if there was a better class of steamer and a faster service?—That is no doubt so.

42. Of course, the Atlantic service is the best in the world, and ought to be in a country like America, and it ought to be the shortest route; and it is a question whether the San Francisco service should not be made a better one. Members of the House are sitting here to try and get better services for the colony, and to, if possible, further build up this line. We want your assistance to accomplish this object, but it is felt that the present time-table does not fit in, owing to the delays and difficulties that are met. We want a sketch given us by you showing what is the best line to recommend to the House?—I understand you, and shall be pleased to supply such a sketch.

43. Could you get it done before you leave Wellington, because we shall probably be dealing with the matter before Monday?—I shall endeavour to do so.

44. We desire to meet the wants of the business people, and so we want you to put this matter lucidly before us. We are getting a similar sketch prepared by the Postal Department for us, but we would like you to give us your views independently as an expert in shipping matters?—If you want a contract speed of fifteen knots you must be prepared to pay a very heavy subsidy, because it would require not only much faster but much larger steamers.

45. Mr. Buchanan.] As a matter of information as to the mails, the Committee was asking Mr. Gray whether it would not accelerate the service if a special train was available at New Plymouth and at Lyttelton to expedite delivery to the extreme south, and his answer was not very conclusive. He said that it generally would. It would be well, however, that you should take it into consideration in making your proposals or suggestions?—Yes. As a rule, the steamer brings the mails on to Wellington, because she makes the voyage in less time than the train.

46. In good weather?—Yes.

47. There is another question I asked Mr. Gray, and that was, Taking the year round, what were the chances of detention through missing tides and bad weather between this and Lyttelton generally? What would be your idea?—Steamers are not often detained at Manukau; while between Wellington and Lyttelton I do not suppose that detention through bad weather averages more than once or twice a year.

47. With the steamers at present in use?—Yes. The chance is very much against it happening on the particular occasion when the mail is being conveyed.

49. The Chairman.] Do I understand you to say that very few, if any, of the delays that have taken place in Auckland have been in connection with the tide? I will put it in this way: Have any delays taken place in Auckland in getting the Frisco mail away for distribution in the south through the tide?—Not many. It happened recently. The mail was not completely loaded on the “Takapuna” until a quarter of an hour or so after the tide had turned, and the captain did not think it wise to leave. It does not often happen so close as that. To-day, for instance, the mail arrived at from 9 to 10 o'clock, and, I believe, it is to leave at noon. The difficulty in forming a close connection with either the Frisco or Vancouver mails is the uncertainty about their arrival. There being no cable across the Pacific, we cannot hear of their progress from stage to stage. The length

of the passage depends upon time occupied at calling-ports loading and discharging cargo, coaling, &c.; also upon the weather experienced. As an instance, I may mention that on the present occasion we had to keep our Monday steamer, the "Takapuna," till yesterday (Wednesday), and eventually she came away yesterday afternoon, without the mail. This causes great inconvenience to the travelling public. We have been very successful for many years in delivering the mails up to time, and the criticism that has been aroused over the one or two delays lately is evidence that they are of rare occurrence, because it shows that the public are accustomed to the mails being in close to time. If I may be permitted I would like to say here that I do not sympathise with the agitation in favour of extremely high speed for mails where heavy subsidies are required to support the steamers. It seems to me that all that should be aimed at should be to secure a fair speed, such as is required for commercial purposes, and that the subsidy should be merely for the purpose of securing punctuality in arrival and departure, so that the mercantile community can rely upon the dates, and make their business arrangements accordingly. A great deal too much also is made of a chance delay of an hour or two in forwarding English mails on the coast—far more than their importance warrants. I may tell you that no special arrangements are made for the carriage of the English mails on the Australian side. Mails for Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland are landed at Adelaide for conveyance by train. If it happens that they are an hour late for the afternoon's express they remain in Adelaide till next afternoon. In like manner, if they should arrive in Sydney on Friday night or Saturday morning, there being no train from Sydney for Brisbane on Saturday night, they remain till Sunday night.

50. What payment is made by the colony for the San Francisco mail?—Payment is by weight. The amount for homeward mails is estimated at £7,500, and we are guaranteed that sum. For the outward mails the freight is estimated to amount to £2,500 or £3,000, now that the mails are divided between the San Francisco and Vancouver services.

51. What is paid to the company by the United States?—At the rate of £28,000 per annum.

52. An annual vote?—Yes. The aggregate mail payments received by the San Francisco mail service are approximately: From the United States, £28,000; from New Zealand, £10,000; from New South Wales and other colonies, £5,000: total, £43,000. You will thus see that the New Zealand contribution is by no means the most important factor, and that if a faster service is required a proportionate increase of subsidy will fall heavily on New Zealand, unless the other contributors join in proportion.

53. From clause 3 of the draft contract, which has been submitted to us for consideration, I see that the general cargo rate to San Francisco is £2 10s. to £3 per ton of 40 cubic feet; while from San Francisco to Auckland the general rate is \$8 to \$10 for 40 cubic feet measurement, showing a charge of from £2 10s. to £3 per ton in the one case, and from £1 12s. to £2 2s. in the other. What is the reason?—The quotation for general cargo from Auckland to San Francisco is practically nominal. But little general cargo is shipped, and the shipments as a rule consist of skins and hides, and occasionally flax. The bulk of the trade is from San Francisco, and varies according to the class of goods and the quantity.

54. Do you think it would foster the trade if the rates were reduced to the same amount both ways?—I do not think so. The rates are not absolutely fixed; they are subject to revision from time to time to promote trade. In fixing rates of freight we keep in view the necessity of encouraging and fostering trade.

55. Do you find that the trade is confined to the Auckland district, or that it is a general New Zealand trade? That is, are your exports from the Auckland district or New Zealand generally to America?—I am not able to answer that question definitely from memory. My impression is that the bulk of the shipments go from Auckland, except in the wool season, when shipments go from the south. I am sanguine that the time is not far distant when there will be a market in San Francisco for many of our products. So far America has been able to produce for itself nearly everything we produce, but the population in America is increasing rapidly; the area of producing districts is diminishing, and I think it likely that before long they will require more of our products, as is the case with the populous countries in the old world.

56. Can you indicate any trade that is likely to arise and might be placed upon record?—I allude to different food products, and also to raw material for manufacturing purposes.

57. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Fruit?—Not fruit, though we have sent apples to San Francisco from Australia in the off-season with some success.

58. *Mr. McLean.*] Much wool?—Not for consumption in San Francisco. Some wool goes by that route, but it goes right across to Boston.

59. *The Chairman.*] If, when the arrangements are completed in connection with the Hawaii, the Americans impose their shipping-laws and refuse to allow you to take trade between Honolulu and San Francisco, how will that affect your ship?—It will affect the earnings of our steamer materially. Our vessel happens to be a very favourite one between Honolulu and San Francisco, and carries a considerable number of passengers.

60. You have been informed about their applying that particular law?—No, we have no indication at present. I have some hope that it will not be put into force, at all events for a time.

61. Have you any suggestion to make to the Committee on this question of risk to your vessel being stopped in the trade to Hawaii from San Francisco, whereas the American boats can trade between Auckland and San Francisco as before? Do not you think the Imperial Government might produce the same effect by some decision which would affect the American trade?—You refer to some retaliatory measure?

62. Yes?—It is very unlikely that the Imperial Government will create any legislation to meet this particular case. It would mean a complete alteration of their whole policy.

63. *Mr. Buchanan.*] In view of foreign possessions obtained by the Americans as the result of their Spanish war, would they not be likely to modify their regulations with regard to foreign shipping?—That is what I had in my mind when I said just now that it is just possible their navigation laws may not apply.

64. You have found indications of better treatment since the institution of the Vancouver service? Is the United States alarmed at the prospect of losing some of her trade?—It has made no difference as far as I can see in the policy of either the railroads or the Government.

65. But Congress might be a little more liberal so as to be able to compete with the Vancouver route?—I do not think much importance is attached to that.

Union Steamship Company of New Zealand (Limited),
Christchurch, 28th October, 1898.

DEAR SIR,—

As requested, I forward some notes on the suggested modification of the time-table of the San Francisco service, with a view of allowing the mails to reach Invercargill and replies to go forward by the first outgoing mail.

While the Frisco service continues to be a monthly one this can only be accomplished in one of two ways—by delaying despatch of the outward steamer under the present schedule, or by substituting faster steamers on the Pacific.

Under the present schedule there is an interval of four days between the arrival of the inward mail at Auckland and the departure of the outward mail, while the steamers have twenty-two to twenty-three lay-days in Sydney and fourteen lay-days in San Francisco. The departure of the outward steamer could be delayed four days so as to leave Auckland on Wednesday instead of Saturday, and connect with the Cunard boat from New York on Saturday instead of the White Star boat on Wednesday. The grave objection to this is that it would increase the steamers lay-days in Sydney by four days and reduce them in San Francisco by a like number. With only a monthly service ten lay-days in San Francisco does not afford sufficient time to allow the steamer to discharge cargo, load bunker-coal and return cargo, nor does it afford time for manufacturers executing orders received by the same mail. The alternative is to substitute faster steamers doing the journey between San Francisco and Auckland in seventeen days, at an average speed of 15 knots, as against the present service of nineteen days with an average speed of $13\frac{1}{2}$ knots. Two days would thus be gained in the arrival and also in the departure, which would give the necessary time for distributing the mails to the South. A much larger subsidy, however, would be required for such a service, and a contract for a period of seven to ten years, to justify a shipowner in building or buying expensive steamers of the class required.

In either case the cost of distributing mails on the coast would be greater than at present, as special steamer and train connections would be required, and I need hardly point out that the frequent departure from the regular sailing-days of coastal steamers through the irregularity of the mails is productive of loss to the steam company and serious inconvenience to the travelling public. It is, to my mind, extremely doubtful whether the convenience of a limited number of individuals in the extreme portion of the colony justifies the extra cost to the colony and the serious inconvenience and loss to a great number of people through the interference with the regular time-table steamers.

Another alternative which I would submit for the consideration of the Committee, is the substitution of a fortnightly service from San Francisco instead of the present four-weekly. This would undoubtedly be the most effective and satisfactory mail-service for the colony. It could be carried out with five steamers—i.e., two more than at present; and you will note from the attached sketch time-table that it would just afford the required interval of eight days between the arrival of inward mail at Auckland and the despatch of the outward one. The lay-days in Sydney would be reduced to thirteen, and in San Francisco to ten. The latter would probably be sufficient in the case of a fortnightly service, as the quantities of cargo naturally would not be so large, and in case of goods not being ready for shipment by the return steamer, they would only have to wait another fortnight instead of a month.

Such a service would satisfy all the requirements of the colony for a few years, and could be obtained at a moderate outlay, and with a short contract of, say, a period of five years, seeing that not more than the present speed of $13\frac{1}{2}$ knots would be required.

With regard to the suggestion that Wellington should be substituted for Auckland as the port of call for the Frisco mail-steamers, I cannot see that any advantage would be gained by this. The extra distance to Wellington is three hundred miles, involving an extra twenty-four hours steaming. The Frisco steamers, which now arrive in Auckland on Tuesday afternoon, would not reach Wellington till Wednesday forenoon or, at times, Thursday morning, and the outward mail, which now leaves Auckland on Saturday at 2 p.m., would have to be despatched from Wellington on Thursday evening: much the same as at present, and affording Wellington people little advantage over the present arrangement, and offering no advantage to ports south of Wellington, while it would deprive Auckland of the advantage they now possess. With Auckland as the port of call, the mails can be delivered at Wellington under favourable circumstances, *via* New Plymouth, in twenty-eight to thirty hours from the time of arrival of the mail-steamer at Auckland, while if the call at New Plymouth were omitted the time would never exceed this, and under ordinary circumstances would probably never exceed twenty-seven hours.

I trust the information I have given here will meet the requirements of the Committee. I am sorry I am not able in the time at my disposal to prepare a sketch time-table on the suggested fifteen-knot service. However, you will no doubt be getting this from the Secretary of the Post Office.

In response to the invitation that I should express my own opinion in a general way, I may say it must be evident that the route *via* San Francisco is the most expeditious for our mails. In view of this, and also of the great promise of intimate friendly relations between the Mother-country and America, the connection between this colony and America should be improved and made more permanent. With this in view, we should aim at a fortnightly service *via* San Francisco, as I have already suggested. The service could be carried out satisfactorily for a few years with

steamers of the present class for a moderate subsidy, pending completion of arrangements for a faster service with a better class of steamers. To secure the latter, it would be necessary for the colony to provide a larger subsidy than at present, and to commit itself for a period of, say, seven to ten years, as an inducement to owners to buy or build suitable steamers. Such a service could not, of course, be secured without assistance from the Government of the United States, but some time would be occupied negotiating for this.

If, on the other hand, a monthly service *via* San Francisco is considered to be sufficient for our requirements, I would suggest that the present arrangements be continued for five years, with an undertaking that if the contractors will at the end of three years substitute steamers capable of averaging 15 knots, the colony will pay an increased subsidy, to be agreed upon, and fix the contract for seven to ten years. This would put the contractors in a position to negotiate with the United States Government for their help also.

R. McNab, Esq., M.H.R., Chairman, Extension of
Commerce Committee, Wellington.

Yours, &c.,
JAMES MILLS.

SKETCH TIME-TABLE of FORTNIGHTLY SERVICE *via* SAN FRANCISCO (Nineteen Days, as at present employing Five Steamers. Put in by Mr. Mills.

	A.	B.	C.	D.	E.	A.
	1898.	1898.	1898.	1898.	1898.	1898.
Leave San Francisco ..	Wed., 28 Sept.	12 October ..	26 October ..	9 November	23 November	7 December.
Arrive and leave Auckland	Tu., 18 Oct.	1 November	15 November	29 " "	13 December	..
" Sydney ..	Sat., 22 "	5 "	19 "	3 December	17 "	..
Lay-days ..	13 "	13 "	13 "	13 "	13 "	..
Leave Sydney ..	Friday, 4 Nov.	18 November	2 December	16 December	30 December	..
" Auckland ..	Wed., 9 "	23 "	7 "	21 " "	4 January	..
Arrive San Francisco ..	Sun., 27 "	11 December	25 "	8 January ..	22 "	..
Lay-days ..	10 "	10 "	10 "	10 "	10 "	..

MONDAY, 31ST OCTOBER, 1898.

W. GRAY, Secretary of Postal Department, further examined.

Mr. Gray put in a memorandum bearing on the question of the Vancouver and San Francisco services generally.

1. *The Chairman.*] We are all aware that the Vancouver service has been no financial success. To your knowledge, is it likely to be continued?—Well, I can only say, unofficially, that I have heard that the company is prepared to continue, but expect a larger payment. The Vancouver contractors are at this disadvantage: they do not receive the sea-rates for the conveyance of mails from Great Britain, as in the case of the San Francisco service. The London Post Office pays over to Canada, and Canada is not disposed to give up the payments, as it subsidises the service to the extent of £25,000 a year. The correspondence, however, is not concluded.

2. *Mr. Duthie.*] The problem of satisfactory services, of course, is very much involved with this Vancouver business, and it makes it very complicated?—Yes, very much.

3. Does the Vancouver route produce more cargo for the steamers than the San Francisco, do you know?—Yes; the ships are now full both ways. Of late the steamers have had full outward cargoes—mainly Queensland sugar, shipped at Sydney. Sugar is also sent from Fiji to Vancouver.

4. *Mr. McLean.*] Sydney is the place of export?—Yes, which results in a minimum through freight.

5. *Mr. Duthie.*] If the cargo arises from Australia is it not doubtful whether they will come on to New Zealand for a small subsidy?—Well, the company is favourably impressed with the trade prospects of the colony. The last steamer from Vancouver landed over 550 tons here.

6. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Of what kind?—General. Reapers and binders form a considerable part at times.

7. *Mr. Duthie.*] And, of course, you are aware there is a kind of railway war over there at present?—Yes, that is true; and probably means that the railway freights from, say, Chicago are cheaper to Vancouver than to San Francisco. The new line of steamers from New York to the colonies may, however, make a difference in the quantity of cargo now carried from San Francisco and Vancouver.

8. As a mail-service, how much longer does it take for the mail to reach London by way of Vancouver than by San Francisco?—About three days longer are allowed; but, as a matter of fact, the delivery has taken even longer.

9. We have had it suggested to us that it would be an economy to work a fortnightly service *via* San Francisco for the two lines. They would work with four steamers, but need six steamers; whereas if there were a fortnightly service with San Francisco they could do it with five steamers. That, I suppose, would be a considerable economy?—In working the service it would.

10. Yes; at any rate, it would be for the contractors?—If there were only a San Francisco service the steamers would probably lose much of the cargo now shipped at Vancouver.

11. But, of course, alluding to the Sandwich Islands, if they do not get enough for the colonies they pick up a loading for Hawaii?—Yes.

12. But, of course, the two American boats are out of date with regard to sanitary arrangements and other matters?—They are not up to date in their appointments, but they continue to maintain a high rate of speed. Although they have been running about sixteen years they can still steam $14\frac{1}{2}$ knots.

13. In connection with that fortnightly service with San Francisco, we have evidence from Mr. Mills, and it is said we could get a more prompt reply by having a fortnightly running—that is, they could despatch from Auckland eight days after arrival?—Yes; you could do that with a fortnightly service of 15 knots, which would give Invercargill a day for replies.

14. What do you think are the requirements for this service?—It is difficult to say. If you want a fortnightly mail-service, one at 15 knots would be more satisfactory than the present speed. You cannot get what you want with the present days of arrival and departure at and from San Francisco—replies from one end of the colony to the other—by any service under 15 knots. To secure replies by the Vancouver line you would need a 16-knot service, and that you are not likely to get at present.

15. In the evidence before us it is calculated that by an altered service, and making an exchange of steamers, we can get regular communication from Auckland to Invercargill in forty-eight hours?—That will indeed be a great gain if it can be effected.

16. Will that assist you very much?—Yes, very much. We now allow about thirty-two hours between the arrival of the steamer at Auckland and delivery of the mails at Wellington. I omitted to mention on Thursday that there were two other cases of delay. There was the unfortunate missing of the tide by the "Takapuna" last month, and the delay last Thursday morning to the "Rotoiti," which had to return to the Onehunga Wharf owing to a strong south-west breeze and ebb-tide, and wait until the afternoon.

17. Of course, there are difficulties of distribution from Auckland on account of the tidal difficulties. I may explain that it is calculated in this Committee that the mail closing any day would catch the train at Taranaki, and should reach us here at 8 o'clock in the evening?—That is, if they accelerated the trains.

18. Yes; that without great difficulty they can leave the Manukau, go round to New Plymouth, and reach here by 8 o'clock in the evening; that the steamer could catch the express at Lyttelton at the present time, the mail reaching Dunedin that night and Invercargill about 3 o'clock the next day. On returning, allowing for country mails coming into Invercargill and the train leaving at 2 o'clock instead of in the forenoon, as at present, the mails would be able to reach Dunedin at 9 o'clock in the evening. Leaving again by express they would reach the steamer at Lyttelton at about 5.30 p.m., and reach here (Wellington) at about 8 o'clock a.m. to catch the Manawatu train and get into New Plymouth at night, and thence to the Manukau next day. It only means arrangements between the Postal Department, the Railway Department, and the Manawatu Company to get this particular thing done?—Of course, this means a complete alteration of present arrangements.

19. But, suppose that was done, would it not improve your whole service?—Very materially.

20. Does anything stand in your way?—Nothing, except the question of expense.

20A. Perhaps you have not followed the Lyttelton and Wellington Steam-service Committee's report?—I have followed the evidence and read the report. I think the proposals are practicable, and, if carried out, the Vancouver and Frisco mail time would, of course, be shortened very considerably.

21. And your time-table shortened?—Yes, of course.

22. According to your time-table you at present get to San Francisco on a Wednesday. If you arrive there on Thursday you will still catch the White Star steamer at New York?—Yes, I have indicated this in my memorandum.

23. Is it not possible to do this?—Yes, if you make the New Zealand departure a day later. It, however, means a Sunday departure from Auckland—that is the trouble.

24. My own impression is that a 15-knot boat is wanted, and that these American boats are out of date; and if we are going to start services against the Suez Canal lines better steamers are required?—That is true. There is a paucity of passengers across the Pacific. The service ought to be more attractive.

25. *Mr. McLean.*] Taking it for all in all, I suppose Wellington would be the best centre for distribution for America, both North and South?—No, not for North and South.

26. But leaving Auckland out of the question?—Yes.

27. And it would be better for the South, would it not?—To the extent of about ten hours. But, of course, you have to consider this: that if you have this proposed fast service between Wellington and Lyttelton, and materially reduce the time between the Manukau and Wellington, as indicated by Mr. Duthie, there would probably be no gain at all.

28. What is the speed supposed to be on the Atlantic side?—Twenty knots, and even twenty-three sometimes.

29. When the mails are delayed which end of the line is it generally—going from here or coming over?—Coming this way. Particularly about this time of the year, when the Atlantic steamers have to face westerly gales. The steamers are now due to leave San Francisco on Wednesday, but I very much doubt whether they will be able to get away on Wednesday during the winter on account of the longer passages across the Atlantic.

30. *Mr. Duthie.*] Who has control of the passage across America? You have no control, I suppose?—No, the United States Post Office.

31. Because they do not send them across by the fastest route sometimes?—We have the assurance of the Washington Post Office that they do so.

32. *Mr. McLean.*] Do they use the fastest boats across the Atlantic?—Yes; our time-tables are framed for the mails to connect with the fastest boats, but their running is liable to be changed from time to time. We cannot prevent this.

33. Have any mails been lost during the time of the present arrangements?—Only one, I think—when the “Schiller” was lost in 1875.

34. *Mr. Buchanan.*] You said there were three days difference between the Frisco and Vancouver routes?—Yes.

35. Does the whole of that arise between Vancouver and London?—No, between Wellington and Vancouver. The Frisco steamers are allowed nineteen days, and the Vancouver boats are allowed twenty-one and a half—they generally take twenty-two. The distance between Wellington and Vancouver is 735 miles longer than it is from Auckland to San Francisco.

36. So that most of the delays arise between here and Vancouver?—Yes, and on the Atlantic, when the fast boats are missed. There is very little difference in the distance between Vancouver and New York and San Francisco and New York—only a few miles. Vancouver to New York is 3,154 miles, and San Francisco to New York 3,210 miles—not a great difference.

37. It is shorter from Vancouver to New York, then?—Yes.

Mr. Buchanan. You have to do a lot of southing from New York to San Francisco, which is not the case on the other line.

Mr. Duthie. Yes, I have noticed it; but these American maps are very deceptive.

38. *Mr. McLean.*] What is the train journey in this case?—About five days.

39. And across the Atlantic how long?—You might say seven days—that is, arrive on the seventh day.

40. Have you any hope of increasing cargo between San Francisco and New Zealand? Taking the class of products produced in San Francisco and New Zealand, do you anticipate any increase in cargo from Frisco to this country, and *vice versa*?—I think there always will be a fair amount from San Francisco, but I do not see what is to create a trade in the opposite direction.

41. And, as far as Vancouver is concerned, what is your view of the prospects of cargo between there and here?—Well, the trade from here to Vancouver is growing, and the prospects seem promising at present. It was thought that there was to be a trade in frozen meat, but this has been, I understand, a comparative failure so far as New Zealand is concerned. Some small shipments have been made, but the export now seems confined to sheep from New South Wales. These sheep, from their size and weight, are said to be better suited for the Canadian markets than ours.

42. *Mr. Duthie.*] With regard to the boats going between here and Auckland: During the time the “Mahinapua” was in the trade things were more satisfactory. The “Rotoiti,” however, seems to meet with trouble because of the tides; but the “Mahinapua” was very much smaller and could get in and out of the Manukau at nearly any state of the tide?—The “Rotoiti” last Thursday was late on the ebb-tide, and had to face a pretty heavy sou’wester. The real trouble in July was in the engine-room; and that probably caused the long passage and prevented the steamer arriving at and leaving New Plymouth on the same tide. The “Rotoiti” is able to arrive and leave the Manukau at an earlier and later state of the tide than the “Takapuna,” which cannot leave the Manukau before two or two hours and a half of high water, and cannot safely leave half an hour after the tide has begun to ebb. The “Mahinapua” could get away at almost any state of the tide.

43. Has the “Rotoiti” been improved?—I understand she has, and on a recent voyage to Nelson, steamed $12\frac{1}{2}$ knots against wind and tide.

44. During the time the “Mahinapua” was running the mails were on the whole regular, with the exception of when there was bad weather?—Well, the deliveries were much longer. Instead of coming down in about twelve or thirteen hours from New Plymouth to Wellington, she used to take about seventeen hours, and about fourteen hours from the Manukau to New Plymouth. She was much more easily handled at the Manukau and New Plymouth than either the “Takapuna” or the “Rotoiti.”

45. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Would it occur often that, although there were eight days between the arrival and the departure of the Frisco mail-steamer in Auckland, mishaps from wind and tide would still prevent the people of Dunedin and Invercargill from replying? Would it often occur, do you think?—No, I think not.

46. It would not prevent them replying?—Certainly not Dunedin. You are now referring to a 15-knot service?

47. No, the fortnightly service?—Well, I have not considered the Frisco service under a fortnightly condition.

48. The interval would be the same in both cases, whether there is a fortnightly service of 15-knot speed or a monthly service? The interval would be the same in both cases?—Yes, probably that would be so. But this should be considered: the probability of a very fast Atlantic service between Great Britain and Halifax or Quebec. Though Messrs. Peterson have dropped it, I understand the proprietors of the Allan line are inclined to take it up. When you have that fast service and better boats on the Pacific the Vancouver mail-service time will be much improved.

49. Where is this new line to run to?—Halifax or Quebec.

50. And what will be the subsidy?—£154,500 a year, of which the Home Government will contribute a third—£51,500—the Canadian Government the balance.

51. *Mr. McLean.*] What does the colony pay to the San Francisco service?—Last year about £8,500, and about £6,000 more for transit across America and the Atlantic.

52. *Mr. Duthie.*] What is the amount the American Government contribute towards the San Francisco mail?—About £28,000 a year.

53. What do they get in return?—They get no direct return.

54. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Not postage or anything?—Of course, they have their postages.

55. *Mr. Duthie.*] Against £28,000 a year what does New Zealand contribute?—New Zealand about £8,500, and New South Wales £4,000.

56. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Recouped by postage, I suppose?—Not in the case of New South Wales.

APPENDICES.

SIR,—

6th October, 1898.

I have the honour to forward you, as requested, the following returns relating to the performance of the San Francisco and Vancouver mail-services: (1.) Tables showing the inward and outward delivery of the San Francisco mails with Auckland as the port of arrival and departure, and the delivery under a 15- and a 16-knot service, compared with the deliveries were Wellington, instead of Auckland, the port of arrival and departure. (2.) Table showing the present running of the Vancouver service, and the days of arrival at and departure from New Zealand and Vancouver under a 15- and a 16-knot contract.

The coastal delivery is not what has been carried out, and can only be accomplished under very favourable conditions. No allowance is made for the fact that the steamers can only arrive and leave Onehunga according to the state of the tide, and, as a rule, during daylight, nor for detentions at New Plymouth. It should be noted that under the present Wednesday departure from San Francisco, which was only adopted in March last, the mails are not due in Auckland until 8 p.m. on the Tuesday. The steamers, however, have reached Auckland in the morning, considerably within contract time, which enabled the south mails being forwarded from Onehunga the same day. Were the mails not to arrive in Auckland until 8 p.m. the Manukau steamer might probably have to wait for daylight.

It should be mentioned that prior to April last the inward San Francisco mails were not due in Auckland until the week after the despatch of the Homeward mails, and it is only since then that the inward mail could possibly reach Wellington before the departure of the outgoing one. Since April the San Francisco mails have arrived at Auckland four times on Tuesday (due date) and thrice on Wednesday; and on four occasions the mails were delivered at Wellington on Wednesday night, giving the business people here the whole of Thursday for replies, the outward mail finally closing at 6 o'clock on Friday morning.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY, Secretary.

The Chairman, Extension of Commerce and Industries Committee,
Parliament Buildings, Wellington.

PACIFIC MAIL-SERVICES.

TABLES showing the days of the week and times the San Francisco mails are due in America from New Zealand and in New Zealand from America under present conditions; also when the mails would be due under a 15- and 16-knot contract:—

San Francisco Service (Inward).

Present departure from San Francisco every fourth Wednesday at, say, midnight. Train with last portion of London mails due at 8.45 p.m.

Mails due at	Present Speed, 13·47 Knots to Auckland.	At 15 Knots to Auckland.	At 16 Knots to Auckland.
Auckland ..	Tuesday, 8 p.m.	Sunday, 11 p.m.	Saturday, 10 p.m.
Wellington ..	Thursday, 4 a.m.	Tuesday, 7 a.m.	Monday, 6 a.m.
Christchurch ..	Thursday, 8 p.m.	Tuesday, 11 p.m.	Monday, 10 p.m.
Dunedin ..	*Friday, 8 a.m.	*Wednesday, 11 a.m... ..	*Tuesday, 10 a.m.

* By special train.

Distance between San Francisco and Auckland, 5,925 miles. Time allowed under present contract, 19 days = 456 hours. Present stoppages: Honolulu, 12 hours; Apia, 4 hours.

If first port of call were Wellington, then the times of arrival would be:—

Mails due at	Speed, 13·47 Knots to Wellington.	At 15 Knots to Wellington.	At 16 Knots to Wellington.
Wellington ..	Wednesday, 6 p.m.	Monday, 7 p.m.	Sunday, 5 p.m.
Auckland ..	Thursday, midnight	Wednesday, 1 a.m.	Monday, 11 p.m.
Christchurch ..	Thursday, 10 a.m.	Tuesday, 11 a.m.	Monday, 9 p.m.
Dunedin ..	*Thursday, 9 p.m.	*Tuesday, 9 p.m.	*Monday, 9 p.m.

* By express train. If by special train, say, 12 hours from Christchurch.

Distance between San Francisco and Wellington, 6,213 miles. Stoppages: Honolulu, 12 hours; Apia, 4 hours.

San Francisco Service (Outward).

Showing results of accelerated service, steamers to arrive at San Francisco present day and hour (Wednesday, 6 p.m.); Auckland, port of departure.

Present time of Leaving.		Steamer could leave if Speed increased to	
		15 Knots.	16 Knots.
Auckland ..	Saturday, 2 p.m. ..	Monday, 11 a.m. ..	Tuesday, noon.
Wellington ..	Friday, 6 a.m. (by train) ..	Saturday, 4 p.m. (by steamer) ..	Sunday, 4 p.m. (by steamer).
Christchurch ..	Wednesday, 9 p.m. ..	Friday, 9 p.m. ..	Saturday, 9 p.m.
Dunedin ..	Wednesday, 11 a.m. ..	Friday, 11 a.m.* ..	Saturday, 11 a.m.*

* Through time Dunedin to Auckland calculated as depending on ordinary train connection, Dunedin to Christchurch.

Stoppages: Apia, 4 hours; Honolulu, 12 hours.

The same as foregoing, substituting Wellington as port of departure.

Leave	Speed, 13·47 Knots to Wellington.	At 15 Knots.	At 16 Knots.
Wellington ..	Friday, 5 p.m. ..	Sunday, 4 p.m. ..	Monday, 6 p.m.
Auckland ..	Thursday, 11 a.m. ..	Saturday, 10 a.m. ..	Sunday, noon.
Christchurch ..	Thursday, 9 p.m. ..	Saturday, 9 p.m. ..	Saturday, 9 p.m.*
Dunedin ..	Thursday, 11 a.m. ..	Saturday, 11 a.m. ..	Saturday, 11 a.m.*

* As there is no train from Dunedin on Sunday, it is here assumed steamer would leave Lyttelton on Saturday night on arrival southern express.

Stoppages: Apia, 4 hours; Honolulu, 12 hours.

Vancouver Service (Inward).

Present departure from Victoria every fourth Friday, 6 a.m.

Mails due at	Speed, 13·32 Knots to Wellington.	At 15 Knots to Wellington.	At 16 Knots to Wellington.
Wellington ..	Saturday, 2 p.m. ..	Thursday, noon ..	Wednesday, 8 a.m.
Auckland ..	Sunday, 8 p.m. ..	Friday 6 p.m. ..	Thursday, 2 p.m.
Christchurch ..	Sunday, 6 a.m. ..	Friday, 4 a.m. ..	Wednesday, midnight.
Dunedin ..	Sunday, 6 p.m.* ..	Friday, 9 p.m. ..	Thursday, noon.*

* Special train.

Distance between Vancouver and Wellington, 6,660 miles. Time allowed under present arrangement, 21½ days = 516 hours. Present stoppages: Honolulu, 12 hours; Suva, 10 hours.

Vancouver Service (Outward).

Steamers to arrive at Vancouver same day and hour as at present (Thursday, 8 a.m.).

Present Time of Leaving.		Steamer could leave if Speed	
Speed, 13·48 Knots per Hour, Wellington to Vancouver.		15 Knots.	16 Knots.
Wellington ..	Thursday, 4 p.m. ..	Saturday, 6 p.m. ..	Sunday, 10 p.m.
Auckland ..	Tuesday, 10 a.m.* ..	Friday, noon ..	Saturday, 4 p.m.
Christchurch ..	Wednesday, 9 p.m. ..	Friday, 9 p.m. ..	Saturday, 9 p.m.
Dunedin ..	Wednesday, 11 a.m. ..	Friday, 11 a.m. ..	Saturday, 11 a.m.

* From 1st December next.

Present stoppages: Suva, 10 hours; Honolulu, 12 hours.

General Post Office, 6th October, 1898.

W. GRAY.

DEAR SIR,—

General Assembly Library, 14th October, 1898.

Re *Fr'isco Service*.—I have seen Mr. Duthie since my conversation with you, and he has asked for the following information: What knot-service and the days of arrival and departure of vessels to enable not only Wellington and Auckland but Christchurch, Dunedin, and Invercargill to reply by the outgoing mail.

Yours, &c.,

ROBERT McNAB.

The Secretary, Post and Telegraph Department, Wellington.

SIR,—

17th October, 1898.

Replying to your letter of the 14th instant, I have the honour to state that with a 15-knot service between Auckland and San Francisco (present day of departure from San Francisco to be maintained) it would be possible for the inward mails to arrive at Dunedin on Wednesday night, and with a 15-knot service in the opposite direction (timed to arrive at San Francisco as at present) the outward mail would not require to leave Dunedin until Friday at 11 a.m. A 15-knot service would, therefore, give one clear day for replies at Dunedin, two days at Christchurch, three days at Wellington, and a week at Auckland. Invercargill would have about six hours for replies, assum-

ing the mails always arrived at Dunedin on Wednesday night and were sent on immediately by special train.

To enable the Dunedin public to reply by the Vancouver service (present day of arrival at and departure from Vancouver being maintained) a 16-knot service between Wellington and Vancouver would be required. This would give Dunedin about one day, Christchurch two days, Wellington three days, and Auckland one day for replies. Invercargill would have about six hours for replies, as in the case of the San Francisco service.

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

The Chairman, Extension of Commerce Committee,
Parliament Buildings, Wellington.

RETURN showing the Number of Letters and other Articles sent and received in the Mails *viâ* San Francisco and *viâ* Vancouver respectively for 1898-99 Contract Period (Twelve Months).

		Number of Letters.	Number of Books.	Number of Newspapers.
United Kingdom, Europe, and America	Despatched <i>viâ</i> San Francisco	562,296	133,488	402,095
	" Vancouver ...	303,996	72,366	225,000
United Kingdom and Europe only*	Received <i>viâ</i> San Francisco...	461,244	410,452	1,143,402
	" Vancouver ...	440,328	413,553	1,152,036

* No figures available for United States, Canada, &c.
NOTE.—The figures are estimated—based on the correspondence of seven mails each way.

W. GRAY.

SAN FRANCISCO AND VANCOUVER MAIL-SERVICES.

THE mail *viâ* San Francisco or Vancouver is due in London fortnightly on the Wednesday, and the mails leave London for New Zealand three days afterwards. The present arrangement is for the San Francisco mails to arrive three days before the departure of the Vancouver mails, the Vancouver mails arriving three days before the departure of the San Francisco mails.

The interval for replies in San Francisco and Vancouver is fourteen days, during which the steamers lie there.

San Francisco : Auckland as Port of Call.

Under a fifteen-knot service between San Francisco and Auckland the mails would be due in Auckland on Sunday, 11 p.m., instead of Tuesday, 8 p.m.; at Wellington on Tuesday morning; Christchurch, Tuesday night or Wednesday morning; Dunedin, Wednesday; and Invercargill, next morning.

The return-mail would leave Auckland on Monday, in place of the previous Saturday, as at present; Wellington, Saturday, instead of Friday morning; Christchurch, Friday, instead of Wednesday; Dunedin, Friday, in the place of Wednesday; and Invercargill, Thursday evening (by special); giving Invercargill about a day for replies, Dunedin a clear day, Christchurch two days, Wellington four days, and Auckland about a week.

Wellington as Port of Call.

Under the present running the mail would be due here on Wednesday, instead of Thursday, with a corresponding gain to southern ports. The Auckland mails, however, would not be delivered until about Thursday, at midnight, instead of Tuesday, as now.

The outward mail would leave Wellington on Friday at 5 p.m., instead of Friday morning, as at present; Christchurch and Dunedin on Thursday evening and morning, instead of Wednesday; Invercargill on Wednesday night. The Auckland mails would have to leave on Thursday morning before the arrival of the inward mail, due about midnight. Only Wellington and Christchurch would be able to reply: Wellington would have about two days, and Christchurch a few hours.

With a fifteen-knot service the inward mails would be due here on Monday, 7 p.m., in the place of Tuesday morning, *viâ* Auckland. The mails would reach Christchurch and Dunedin on Tuesday, and Invercargill on Wednesday. The Auckland mail would not be delivered until about 1 a.m. Wednesday, instead of on Sunday at 11 p.m., as would be the case were Auckland first port of call.

The outward mail would leave Wellington on Sunday, 4 p.m.; Christchurch and Dunedin on Saturday morning and evening; Invercargill, Friday evening; and Auckland, Saturday morning. This would give Wellington between five and six days for replies, Christchurch between three and four days, Dunedin about three days, and Invercargill about two days. Auckland would also have about two days for replies.

It would be possible to despatch the outward steamer either from Auckland or Wellington a day later than provided for, giving a day longer for replies.

General Post Office, 31st October, 1898.

W. GRAY.

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