

newspapers exceeding 8 oz. in weight prepaid 1d. by the direct steamers, and that while you see no objection to Christmas numbers of weekly newspapers being sent by that route, you consider that the ordinary weekly issues should be forwarded by way of San Francisco.

I have carefully reconsidered the matter; but I regret that, in view of existing transit conditions across America and the Atlantic, which, as already explained, New Zealand does not control in any way, I am unable to depart from the arrangement already decided upon. At present it costs the Department about 1s. 5d. (16.80d.) for each pound of newspaper mail forwarded *via* San Francisco, and it does not appear to me to be reasonable for newspaper-proprietors to urge a further concession, which, in view of the largely augmented posting of weekly newspapers that may be expected, would mean a further serious loss to the post office in the case of the San Francisco service. The difference between the postage received—say, 1½d. on each pound of weekly newspapers—and the 1s. 5d. per pound paid for carriage, you will, I am sure, admit is too great to warrant the free use of this route for heavy papers prepaid at the reduced rate.

There should be little or no detention of newspapers at this end, as suggested, as the direct steamers leave every week, or oftener. The San Francisco mail interval is three weeks, and I scarcely think newspaper-proprietors or addressees of illustrated papers will be inconvenienced by the new arrangement.

I shall make strong representations with a view to getting a large reduction of the cost of newspaper-transit across America and the Atlantic, and, if successful, will then open all routes at the penny rate.

I have, &c.,

J. G. WARD, Postmaster-General.

J. C. Wilkin, Esq., G. G. Stead, Esq., H. Brett, Esq., and George Fenwick, Esq., Dunedin.

No. 28.

EXTRACT from Order in Council dated the 3rd March, 1904.

SCHEDULE.

Reduced Newspaper-postage for the United Kingdom.

THE rate of postage on newspapers for the United Kingdom shall be 1d. for each newspaper, irrespective of weight, but subject to the following conditions as to despatch:—

If under 8 oz. prepaid 1d.	...	...	Sent by first available route.
If over 8 oz. prepaid 1d.	...	...	Sent by direct steamer only.
If prepaid less than 1d....	...	...	Surcharged at printed-paper rates, and sent by direct steamer only.
If wholly unpaid	...	...	Detained and sent to the Dead Letter Office.

Newspapers over 8 oz. which it is desired may be sent by the San Francisco or the Federal route must be specially superscribed and prepaid at the rate of 1d. for the first 4 oz. and ½d. for each additional 2 oz. or fraction thereof.

If more than one newspaper be enclosed in a packet, the cover must clearly indicate the number of newspapers enclosed, and the proper postage be affixed, or the parcel shall be surcharged at printed-paper rates.

No. 29.

The Hon. the PRIME MINISTER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Prime Minister's Office, Wellington, 15th March, 1904.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 26th January last, forwarding copy of correspondence between yourself and the Imperial Post Office on the subject of the postage on newspapers from this colony for the United Kingdom. I am also in receipt of your cablegram of the 9th ultimo, advising that the Imperial Postmaster-General agreed to the delivery of newspapers from New Zealand prepaid 1d. each, irrespective of weight, but stating that it was to be understood that such newspapers were to be posted in New Zealand, and the postage prepaid.

I have to confirm my telegram of the 12th February in reply thereto, copy of which is attached.

I enclose four copies of the Order in Council reducing the newspaper-rate to the United Kingdom, from which you will observe that newspapers over 8 oz. in weight, prepaid at the penny rate, are to be sent only by direct steamer, instead of by the first available route as in the case of newspapers of lesser weight. This has been decided upon to avoid an increase in loss already incurred by the New Zealand Post Office in the transmission of newspapers hence by the San Francisco route.

I have, &c.,

J. G. WARD,

For the Prime Minister.

The Hon. W. P. Reeves, Agent-General for New Zealand, London.