

No. 253.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Washington, to the Hon. the ACTING POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington.
 (Telegram.) Washington, D.C., 29th April, 1907.
 REPLYING your cablegram: Send to Honolulu parcels for United States.
 [P.O. 07/998.]

No. 254.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to CHIEF POSTMASTERS.
 (Telegram.) Wellington, 30th April,
 PARCELS for the United States are to be sent forward on Auckland for despatch by Vancouver
 steamers to Honolulu. Arrangements made for transit between Honolulu and United States.
 [P.O. 07/998.]

MAIL-SERVICE VIA TEHUANTEPEC.

No. 255.

[Extract from *Hansard* No. 7, of 12th September, 1906.]

MAIL-SERVICE *via* NEW YORK AND TEHUANTEPEC.

Mr. WILFORD (Hutt) asked the Government, Whether they will immediately ascertain the possibility of a quick mail-service *via* New York and Tehuantepec, and whether they will, as soon as possible, place before honourable members authentic information, with all details of the proposed service?

The Hon. Sir J. G. WARD (Postmaster-General) replied, The supposition that a faster mail-service between Liverpool and New Zealand is possible *via* Tehuantepec than by way of San Francisco is not supported by facts. The distance between Salina Cruz, the Pacific terminal port of the Tehuantepec Railway, and Auckland direct is 6,180 miles, as against 5,925 miles between San Francisco and Auckland *via* Honolulu and Pago Pago, or 255 miles longer than the present San Francisco route. Mr. E. F. Wright, a member of the Royal Colonial Institute, has published what he believes to be the superior advantages of the Mexican route for a fast service between Liverpool and New Zealand by twenty-knot boats on the Pacific (*vide* the *New Zealand Times* of the 28th ultimo). He calculates the time from Liverpool to New York at six days, New York to Salina Cruz four days (as against three days and a half from New York to San Francisco), and Salina Cruz to New Zealand twelve days, or twenty-two days for the through journey. But in the newspaper report which has, apparently, given rise to the honourable member's question, the time from Salina Cruz to New Zealand is understated by nearly a day. The present running from San Francisco to Auckland, *via* Honolulu and Pago Pago, is between seventeen and eighteen days (an average of about fifteen knots an hour), but were the service performed by twenty-knot boats the time would be reduced to about thirteen days, including stoppages. By dropping out Honolulu and Pago Pago the distance would be shortened from 5,925 to 5,565 miles, and the journey by twenty-knot steamers could be made in eleven days and a half. But the subsidy for such a service would be far beyond what would be paid by the colony, as it would be in respect of the suggested twenty-knot service *via* Tehuantepec, unless Mexico or some other country contributed largely to the cost, which is not at all probable. The railway-line of 190 miles between Coatzacoalcos, the Mexican Gulf port, and Salina Cruz, on the Pacific, is already completed and used for local traffic. The Salina Cruz Harbour will not be finished for some time, but both ports will be available for cargo traffic about the end of the year. This railway brings the ports on the east and west coasts of America within a much shorter distance of each other than would be possible *via* the Panama Canal. Indeed, the Tehuantepec Railway line is heralded as "the rival of the Panama route." New York and North Atlantic ports will be 1,200 miles, and New Orleans and Mexican Gulf ports 1,400 miles, nearer San Francisco, Japan, and China. The harbours will accommodate vessels carrying 10,000 tons of cargo, which, it is alleged, could be landed, sent across the isthmus, and reshipped in four or five days, and in cases of emergency in about thirty-six hours. But such transshipping would be fatal to the success of any fast mail line to New Zealand and Australia. Mr. Wright contemplates the running of the Pacific section of the service with only two steamers, and allowing only one lay day at either terminal port. But this would not be possible in practice. At least three steamers would be required, with at least a week at either