

1854-5.

VICTORIA.

NORTHCOTE DAILY MAIL.

RETURN TO ADDRESS,

MR. FAWKNER—16TH MARCH, 1855.

*LAI*D upon the COUNCIL TABLE by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of HIS EXCELLENCY THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, and ordered by the COUNCIL to be printed, 20th March, 1855.

Postmaster General to the Honorable the Colonial Secretary, with Return respecting Northcote Mail.

No. 47.]

General Post Office,
Melbourne, 16th March, 1855.

SIR,

I have the honor to forward herewith the Return with reference to the Northcote Mail, which, in your letter of yesterday, I am required to prepare for the information of the Legislative Council. Deeming that complete information on the same subject will probably be acceptable to you, I beg to submit such further statements and remarks as I consider may prove useful supplements to the Return.

The Northcote post office, in charge of the present postmaster, Mr. Horace Bastings, a storekeeper there resident, was first established on 1st August, 1854, by direction of His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, and in compliance with the prayer of a memorial proceeding from the inhabitants, and more particularly promoted by Dr. Macarthur, J.P.; which Memorial I forwarded on the 25th May last, with my recommendation that its prayer should be conceded.

From the 1st August to the termination of 1854 no express conveyance was provided for the Mail, which was transmitted twice weekly with the pre-existing Plenty Mail, which passes through Northcote. In preparing the Mail arrangements of this year, I had in recollection the strongly expressed opinion of the Legislature in the Session of 1853-4, in favor of postal extension, and that the inhabitants of the densely populated suburban regions of Richmond, St. Kilda, Emerald Hill, and the further portions of North Melbourne and Collingwood, had had in 1853 warrant for anticipation that a delivery by letter carriers would be granted them in the course of 1854, and that these anticipations had only been realised in the cases of Emerald Hill and portions of Collingwood and North Melbourne, though the necessity of the accommodation was on all grounds equally conspicuous as respects Richmond, South Yarra, Prahran, St. Kilda, Sandridge, and Williamstown.

With the view of extending the delivery to these last mentioned places, and perfecting that of those just before mentioned, letter carriers for Williamstown and Sandridge, and additional carriers for Melbourne (in which latter delivery the other places enumerated would be) were placed in the Estimates, as originally prepared, for 1855; and in order to economise the time of these additional carriers, occupied in the districts most distant from the General Post Office, so as to enable them, in some instances, to serve larger beats, and in others to make more frequent deliveries, it appeared expedient to provide carriage conveyance to and from the beats; and this service was united with that of the transmission of certain suburban Mails, as per marked passages on second page of attached Call for Tenders, dated 5th September, 1854. Of the services just indicated, 36, 40, and 41 were not new; and the cause of the introduction of 42 (Northcote), and 44 (Flemington), was thus explained in a letter which I had the honor of addressing you on the 24th August last:—"Proposed to meet the conveyance of letter carriers to Collingwood and North Melbourne, which are extending rapidly towards the rising villages of Northcote and Flemington respectively." The tenders invited, as above stated, were forwarded on the 15th November, with my Report, to the Tender Board, recommending for acceptance in each instance the lowest tenders, and drawing attention to the "considerable increase of the Mail Service, especially as respects the accommodation of the large population suburban to Melbourne, and the commercial inhabitants of Williamstown and Sandridge."

The great reductions in the force of letter carriers on the final, as compared with the original Estimates for 1855, have alone prevented the full contemplated advantage being taken of the Suburban Mails, the tenders for all of which were accepted before the carriers were reduced. And in the case of the Northcote and Flemington Mails, as payments of respectively £150 and C.—No. 34.

£200 per annum have been contracted for, the conveyances are made available for the transit of Mails daily to the places originally selected mainly as convenient termini for the carrier-vans' journies, though not without their intrinsic claims, from their population and propinquity to the Metropolis to daily communication with it.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

A. McCRAE,

Postmaster General.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary.

P.S.—I omitted to mention that since the 7th instant, the Northcote daily Mail has been discontinued by the failure of the contractor; and the mail is now sent twice weekly by the Plenty mail man.

A. McCRAE.

Postmaster General.

RETURN with reference to Northcote Mail, as moved for in the Legislative Council, March, 1855.

QUESTIONS.

1. The date of the first establishment of a daily Post to Northcote?
2. At whose instance, request, or application the daily Mail to Northcote was formed?
3. The amount of money expended per year, quarter, or month?
4. What means are used to transmit this Mail, whether by footman, horseman, or by what sort of conveyance?
5. What number of letters and newspapers are sent daily, and how many per week for the last six months?
6. The salary or allowance to the Postmaster at Northcote, and whether any messenger or delivery Clerk is employed, if so, at what cost?

ANSWERS.

1. 1st January, 1855.
2. Postmaster General's letter to the Honorable the Colonial Secretary, No. 328, dated 24th August, 1854, explanatory of projected Mail arrangement for 1855.
3. In all £175 per annum; being Mail contract, £150; Postmaster's allowance, £20; contingencies, say £5.
4. According to contract of which approved by Postmaster General. A wheeled vehicle, drawn by horses and carrying passengers, is the present means.
5. Daily average since 1st January, nine letters and six newspapers; weekly average from 1st September, 1854, to 28th February, 1855 (six months), thirty-three letters and twenty newspapers.
6. Postmaster's allowance included in answer to the third question, £20 per annum. No other person employed or salary paid for post office service of any kind at Northcote.

(Signed)

A. McCRAE,

Postmaster General.

General Post Office,
Melbourne, 16th March, 1855.

CONDITIONS OF CONTRACTS FOR CONVEYANCE OF MAILS.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 5th September, 1854.

PERSONS desirous to contract for the undermentioned Conveyance of Mails and other Transport Services for the Post Office Department for Twelve Months, from the 1st of January, 1855, are invited to deposit their offers, in writing, in the prescribed form (to be had on application at the Melbourne or any other Post Office in the Colony), endorsed, "Tender for Conveyance of Mails," in the Tender Box at the Audit Office, Melbourne, on or before Tuesday, the 31st of October next.

Contractors are requested to describe the Mails or Services for which they tender by their numbers as below. Their attention is also particularly directed to the Conditions of Contract, which will be rigidly adhered to.

ROUTES.

1. Between Melbourne and Alberton, by way of Oakleigh, Dandenong, and Sale, weekly.
2. Between Melbourne and the Kangaroo Ground, by way of Warringal and Eltham, bi-weekly.
3. Between Melbourne and Upper Plenty, weekly or bi-weekly.
4. Between Melbourne and Albury, by way of Kilmore, Benalla, Wangaratta, and Beechworth, with a branch from Kilmore to Heathcote, bi-weekly.
5. Between Heathcote and Waranga, weekly.
6. Between Heathcote and Maiden's Punt, by way of Hopwood's Inn, weekly.
7. Between Melbourne and Bulla, by way of Broadmeadows, bi-weekly.
8. Between Melbourne and Sandhurst, by way of Keilor, Kyneton, Elphinstone and Castlemaine, bi-weekly, with a branch from the Porcupine Inn to Lockwood and Campbell's Inn.
9. Between Castlemaine and Swan Hill, by way of the Serpentine Post Office, weekly.
10. Between Castlemaine and Maldon, bi-weekly, with a weekly extension to Maryborough.
11. Between Castlemaine and Fryer's Creek, bi-weekly.
12. Between Kyneton and Kingower, weekly by way of Mount Franklyn, Carisbrook, and Maryborough, communicating with Hepburn either by a branch from Mount Franklyn or on the journey from Mount Franklyn to Kyneton as may be ordered.
13. Between Melbourne and Ballarat, by way of Bacchus Marsh and Ballan, bi-weekly.
14. Between Melbourne and Geelong, daily (Sundays excepted).
15. Between Geelong and Ballarat, by way of Meredith and Buninyong, bi-weekly.
16. Between Ballarat and Creswick's Creek, bi-weekly.

17. Between Ballarat and the Avoca Diggings, by way of Burnbank, bi-weekly.
18. Between the Avoca Diggings and the Yowen Hill Post Office, weekly.
19. Between Burnbank and Horsham, by way of Crowlands, and Glenorchy, weekly.
20. Between Ballarat and Chepstow, by way of Smyth's Creek, weekly, with extension to Streatham, if required.
21. Between Geelong and Shelford, bi-weekly or tri-weekly, as may be required.
22. Between Shelford and Hamilton, by way of Streatham and Dunkeld, bi-weekly.
23. Between Hamilton and Portland, bi-weekly.
24. Between Hamilton and Belfast, weekly.
25. Between Hamilton and Penola, by way of Casterton, weekly.
26. Between Dunkeld, or Hamilton, and Apsley (as may be required), by way of Cavendish and Harrow, weekly.
27. Between Portland and Casterton, by way of Hotspur and Digby, weekly.
28. Between Shelford and Elephant Bridge, bi-weekly.
29. Between Elephant Bridge and Belfast, bi-weekly, by way of McWilliam's Inn and Woodford, with a branch four times a week, or as required for the service of this Mail and No. 31, between Woodford and Warrnambool, weekly.
30. Between Belfast and Portland, weekly or bi-weekly.
31. Between Belfast and Wickliffe, by way of Woodford, weekly.
32. Between Geelong and Colac, bi-weekly.
33. Between Colac and Elephant Bridge, by way of Timboon, weekly.
34. Between Geelong and Indented Heads, bi-weekly.
35. Between Geelong and Queenscliff, daily.
36. From the General Post Office, in Melbourne, or the Post Office or Mail-room at Sandridge, to vessels in Hobson's Bay, as often as may be required, and from vessels in Hobson's Bay to these Post Offices as often as Mails may arrive, the Melbourne communication being always *via* Sandhurst, and the landing and shipment being effected by steamers. Also the daily conveyance of a letter carrier to and from Melbourne and Emerald Hill, and the conveyance twice a day of a Mail between Melbourne and Sandridge.
37. Between the Post Office Sandridge and Williamstown, twice a-day.
38. From the Post Office at Williamstown to vessels in Hobson's Bay, as required.
39. From and to the General Post Office, Melbourne, and vessels at the Government or other wharves, as the Postmaster General may require.
40. Between Melbourne and Brighton, daily, by way of Prahran and St. Kilda.
41. Between Melbourne and Hawthorn, daily, by way of Richmond.
42. Between Melbourne and Northcote, daily.
43. Between Melbourne and Pentridge, by way of Brunswick, daily.
44. Between Melbourne and Flemington, daily.

Persons tendering for Nos. 40, 41, 42, and 44, must state the rate per man at which they will effect the daily conveyance of letter carriers, as follows: No. 40, to Prahran and St. Kilda, No. 41, to Richmond, No. 42, to Collingwood, No. 44, to North Melbourne.

By "Hobson's Bay," is to be understood the anchorage taken up by vessels entering or departing from the Port of Melbourne.

CONDITIONS, ETC.

First.—It must be understood, that in all instances the usual mail road between the points above mentioned is to be travelled; and where no mail has heretofore run, that course is to be adopted which the Postmaster General may direct, or the contractor specify in his tender.

Second.—Intending contractors must give due consideration to the winter difficulties of the roads, and to the necessity for provisions for the crossing of rivers or creek by boat or otherwise, and they must bear in mind that no excuse for delay will be even entertained unless supported by certificates from persons of known respectability as to the cause of delay, and that it is attributable to no want of liberal provision both for ordinary duties and to overcome difficulties arising from stress of weather, or from the occurrence of accidents to the men, horses, or vehicles employed.

Third.—Contractors will be not merely bound to convey on and within such days and hours, and with such celerity (not less than six miles an hour) as the Postmaster General may direct, all mails, bags, letters, packets, and newspapers, which may be delivered to them, under the authority of the Postmaster General, or any Postmaster, but further, to provide for that service such means of conveyance, both as respects description and extent as may meet every emergency, and all variations in the bulks of the Mails, whether or not the transmission of such Mails (either as respects address or contents) has been or is now customary. When there appears in the opinion of the Postmaster General, or any officer by him duly authorised, any failure in respect of such ample provision, the deficiency may be at once repaired by the hire or purchase of every requisite at the contractor's cost and risk.

Fourth.—Contractors can obtain the permission of the Postmaster General to convey, in addition to the mails, such limited number of passengers or weight of parcels as their means may appear equal to, such authority being, however, no plea or excuse for delays of mails, the conveyance of which must always be the paramount consideration; and the Postmaster General or other proper officer can at once revoke or modify such permission when it appears that delays have ensued or are likely to ensue from passenger traffic. Every vehicle employed in the mail service must have painted on its door or body, in conspicuous characters, and in addition to the words "Royal Mail," or other sufficient indication of its being so employed, a statement of the number of passengers which it is permitted to convey. For every passenger, or corresponding weight of

parcels carried in excess of such authorised and exhibited number, a penalty of Twenty pounds sterling will be levied.

Fifth.—Contractors will be bound to prevent the conveyance of any letter or packet by any of their servants or passengers or otherwise through their instrumentality, to the prejudice of the Post Office revenue; but they are bound to deliver along the prescribed or usual mail road, all loose letters and private bags entrusted or tendered to them either by or under the authority of a postmaster; as well as to convey, and, at the first Post Office arrived at, deliver up every loose letter or private bag which, beyond the precincts of a post town they may be required by any one to take charge of.

The penalty on a contractor for every offence in these respects, as well as for the delivery or receipt within a post town, or within a mile of a Post Office, by a mail man of any article subject to postage charge, shall be Five pounds.

Sixth.—Contractors will be liable to a fine of Ten Shillings for every five minutes' delay after the specified time of starting, unless such delay be under instructions and to await any overdue Mail for further conveyance; and a like penalty will be inflicted for every ten minutes' delay in arrival, except for the first five or ten minutes respectively.

Seventh.—Contractors are particularly to remember that both on the main and branch roads they will be fined for the full delay that may, in consequence of their late arrival at any point of such road, ensue in the further transmission of each mail entrusted to them, and not merely for the amount of late arrival at such point. The delaying contractor is bound to forward the Mail by express to its final destination, or till it overtakes the proper conveyance at a Post Office in time for due transference through the hands of a Postmaster.

The Postmaster General will, when it appears not inconsistent with the public service, authorise arrangements, dependent upon his continued approval, between Contractors for conjoining lines, to avert, by awaiting one another's arrival, ill consequences to themselves and the public, but it is to be distinctly understood that the proper responsibility of each party to such an arrangement will not be altered or removed.

Eighth.—The Postmaster General will offer and pay, at the cost of the Contractor, such reward as in his judgment may appear fit, for the recovery of any lost Mail, letter, packet, or newspaper.

Ninth.—For every separate mail package damaged by wet or otherwise injured, through failure on the part of any Contractor to make adequate provision for its protection, such contractor shall be liable to a penalty of one pound sterling, and to a further fine of sixpence for each damaged letter, packet, or newspaper, of its contents.

Tenth.—Drivers, postmen, and all persons in any way employed on the mail service must be free and of certified good character, and they, as well as the horses, vehicles, and all other mail appliances of every kind are to be at all times subject to the inspection and approval or rejection of the Postmaster General. Every contractor failing within such reasonable time as may be allowed him to remedy any deficiency in any of these respects shall for every such act be mulcted in a sum not exceeding ten pounds.

Eleventh.—Contractors employing, or required to employ, wheeled vehicles, boats, or vessels, will be required, on the requisition of the Postmaster General, to provide free seats therein for officers or servants of the Department travelling on the public service; such officers will be counted as authorised passengers.

Twelfth.—All fines and penalties incurred under contract, may be either deducted by the Postmaster General from the payments becoming due to a contractor, or recovered by ordinary legal process, and all such fines are to be considered over and above any penalties established by any Act of Council.

Thirteenth.—In all tenders the same division of the roads as shewn above must be adopted, and each division (to be designated by number) must be separately tendered for; but a contractor, desirous of uniting several lines in one service, may accompany his separate tenders for each with an offer of reduction in the event of all, or any special lot of his tenders being accepted. But tenders for sub-divisions of the roads as above will be entertained, provided that by separate tenders each road as defined be completed.

Fourteenth.—No tender will be entertained which does not bear the *bona fide* signatures of two responsible persons, engaging to enter into a bond with the Contractor in double the amount of contract for the due performance of all its stipulations and the safety of the Mails.

Fifteenth.—Contractors will be strictly bound not to sub-let any portion of their contracts without the consent of the Postmaster General.

Sixteenth.—The Postmaster General may appoint deputies to exercise all or any of the powers reposed in him by the contracts.

Seventeenth.—All further particulars may be obtained at the General Post Office, Melbourne, where intending contractors are requested to apply.

Eighteenth.—Contractors will have to prepare their own accounts (forms of which can be had at the General Post Office), and take the necessary steps for their collection themselves, according to any regulations which exist or may be issued.

Nineteenth.—Contractors will enjoy no exemption from payment of tolls, puntage, or any similar charges.

Twentieth.—Conveyance by wheeled vehicles will be in all cases, where practicable, preferred.

H. 9294.

By His Excellency's Command,
JOHN FOSTER.