

*(COUNCIL PAPER No. 58.)*

Despatch from the Secretary of State conveying the proposals of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company for an accelerated Service via Plymouth.

*The Secretary of State to His Excellency the Governor.*

TRINIDAD.  
No. 86.

DOWNING STREET,  
28th April, 1891.

SIR,

I am directed by the Secretary of State to transmit to you for the consideration of your Government and for your observations thereon the documents specified in the annexed Schedule, on the subject of proposals for the modification of the West India Mail Service.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT G. W. HERBERT.

The Officer Administering  
the Government of Trinidad.

Date.	Description of Document.
25th April, 1891	... Copy of a letter from the Treasury enclosing one from the General Post Office containing proposals for an accelerated service viâ Plymouth.

*Treasury to Colonial Office.*

6184.  
91.

TREASURY CHAMBERS,  
25th April, 1891.

SIR,

I am directed by the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury to transmit to you, to be laid before Lord Knutsford, the accompanying copy of a letter which they have received from the Postmaster-General containing proposals for an accelerated Mail service to the West Indies viâ Plymouth, and I am to request that my Lords may be favoured with any observations which Lord Knutsford may wish to offer thereon.

I am, &c.,

R. E. WELBY.

*General Post Office to Treasury.*

No. 105 R.

GENERAL POST OFFICE,  
20th April, 1891.

MY LORDS,

By clause 17 of the Contract between this Department and the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company the Postmaster-General has power to substitute Plymouth for Southampton as the port of departure for the West India Mails, and in the case of such substitution, the period of transit from this country to Barbados is to be diminished by nine hours.

I find that by exercising this power and accelerating to some extent the speed of the Packets on the voyage to Barbados, it would be practicable to despatch the Mails from Plymouth on Thursday instead of from Southampton on Wednesday, every fortnight, and to deliver the mails at the several West India Islands at the same time as at present, thus curtailing by a whole day the course of post between this country and the West Indies—an advantage which has been urged upon me by many influential Chambers of Commerce.

Although no provision for such an increase of speed is made in the contract, the Directors of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company have offered, upon certain conditions to undertake it.

The price they would ask as an additional payment during the currency of the contract as at present terminable is £6,000 a year; but, if the contract were extended for two years they would give the additional speed for £2,000 a year; or they would do it without extra charge if the contract were extended for three years.

It appears to me that the last of these alternatives involving no additional payment to the Company is the best, and I apprehend that Your Lordships would feel no hesitation—looking at the great advantage contemplated—in asking Parliament to authorise an extension of the present contract, which in itself is a good one, for a period of three years from the 30th June, 1895.

In order to save the whole business day for posting letters throughout the Kingdom it would be necessary for this Department to accelerate also the arrival of the North Mails at Plymouth once a fortnight so as to admit of embarkation of the mails for the West Indies not later than on alternate Thursday mornings, and to accomplish this a Special Train with a sorting carriage attached would be required from Bristol to Plymouth at an expense estimated at about £1,200 a year for the Train and £167 10 a year for a sorting force on the Railway to make up the bags for the West Indies.

Practically therefore the cost of this improved service would be something under £1,400 a year, and believing that this sum would be well spent in securing so considerable an advantage, I recommend Your Lordships to sanction this expenditure.

I should add that the Royal Mail Company make it a condition, which seems reasonable, that the deduction from their subsidy provided by Clause 24 of the Contract for failing to provide a vessel ready to put to sea at the appointed day and hour, shall not apply to the Packets leaving Plymouth, provided that the Packet is ready at Southampton (the actual port of departure) at the time required, and that her not being ready at Plymouth is due to circumstances beyond the control of the Company.

HENRY CECIL RHODES.

## BOTANICAL DEPARTMENT,

2ND JUNE, 1891.

Account Sales on THREE CASES SPICES shipped per S. S. "Andes" to New York and sold on account of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Trinidad.

2 Cases Nutmegs, 308lbs. nett. @ 55c.	...		\$ 169 40
1 Case Mace, 48lbs. nett. @ 50c.	...		24 00
			<hr/>
Freight—3 cases @ 50c.	...	\$ 1 50	\$ 193 40
Customs Entry	...	0 60	
Cartage	...	2 50	
Commission @ 5 per cent. on \$193 40	...	9 67	14 27
			<hr/>
Nett proceeds	...		\$ 179 13
			<hr/> <hr/>

The above Account Sales show that for goods of this quality the American market is quite equal to the English, and it has been so tested by several successive shipments, and that while English charges and freight, etc., cost 12 per cent. on the value, American market costs on 6½ per cent. on this head—a saving of nearly 50 per cent. on cost and charges.

J. H. HART, F.L.S.,  
Superintendent.