

considerable sum of money. It seemed prudent, therefore, on financial grounds, to postpone the commencement of the Panama Contract.

With respect to the Inter-Colonial services to be abandoned, I have to observe that it seemed expedient to secure to the Government the power of so doing; but there is nothing to prevent their continuance if such be determined on.

The form of Contract is now being prepared by Mr. Ashurst, Solicitor to H.M. Post-Office, and copies will, I trust, be ready for transmission by next mail.

In conclusion, I have to state that the negotiations for the present contract have been entered into with the desire of carrying into effect as fully as possible what seemed to me to be the intentions of the General Assembly expressed in the Session held last year. I trust that the result will be deemed satisfactory.

I have, &c.,

CROSBIE WARD.

The Hon. Colonial Secretary,
Auckland, New Zealand.

No. 51.

Killinchy, 27th November, 1863.

MY LORD,—

I have the honor to acquaint you, for the information of the Board of Directors, that the Consul General for France has applied to me to know whether the Government of New Zealand are willing that the mail steamers between Panama and Wellington shall call at Tahiti, and if so, on what conditions.

I shall be obliged if the Board will give this subject their early consideration, and inform me as soon as possible for what addition to the subsidy a call can be made at Tahiti, either (1) on the voyage each way, or (2) on the outward voyage only from Panama to New Zealand, and the additional time that would be required in each case.

The New Zealand Government will be glad to oblige the French Government by including Tahiti in the service if possible, and it will therefore be a satisfaction to them if the Board can undertake the required addition to the Service at a moderate cost, and without any material loss of time on the voyage.

I have, &c.,

CROSBIE WARD.

The Right Honourable Lord Claud Hamilton, M.P., &c.,
Chairman I. C. R. M. Company, 41, Moorgate Street, London.

No. 52.

London, 4th December, 1863.

SIR,—

Referring to previous correspondence on the subject of the request of the French Government to know whether the steamers under contract with the New Zealand Government might call at Tahiti on the voyage each way between New Zealand and Panama, and to the interview which I had the honour to have with you on the subject, I beg to inform you that the question has been submitted for the consideration of the Contractors.

They inform me that to call at Tahiti would involve a considerable departure from the proper course, especially on the eastward voyage from New Zealand to Panama, and that thereby a loss of time, prejudicial to the interests of the Australian Colonies would be incurred, which may be estimated at about three days on an average voyage.

The additional mileage to be steamed would, of course, be an element in the calculation of the additional subsidy to be paid for the service, while the delay spoken of might be obviated by the employment of a swifter class of vessel, to the use of which an additional subsidy would also be required as an inducement.

So far, therefore, no obstacle exists to making Tahiti a port of call but such as may be at once removed by the liberality of the French Government.

But the Contractors state that before they are prepared to name the amount for which they would perform the Service asked for, they must be better informed as to the navigation of the seas around, and on the approach to Tahiti, from both east and west; and they desire also to obtain the most accurate information available as to the Port and Harbour of Tahiti, and the facilities which can be offered for coaling there. They have no doubt that these facts are fully in the possession of the Ministry of Marine of your Government, and they respectfully request that all such information may be supplied to them. In this request I beg to concur.

I have, &c.,

CROSBIE WARD.

A. Mons. Fleury, Consul General for France,
French Consulate, London.