

but if this is not enough they will still profit by the alternation with the Suez route; from which we shall enjoy no benefit at all.

In conclusion, you will observe that I have fixed the departure from Panama to New Zealand on the same day as that of arrival at Colon from Southampton. I am told that the West India R. M. boats are excessively punctual, and the hour of their arrival is 6 a.m. on the day specified. Persons who have crossed the Isthmus tell me that no difficulty is experienced in making the arrivals and departures in one day. If it can be done, of course we ought to do it. But if, on reference to the Company mentioned, it is found unwise to fix this date, of course it can be altered, and at any rate your time will depend to some extent on theirs.

Pray let me know your opinion on this point as soon as possible.

I have, &c.,

CROSBIE WARD.

James Worley, Esq., Secretary I. C. R. M. Company.

Leave Panama 22nd; leave Wellington 9th } of each
Arrive at Wellington 23rd; arrive at Panama, 8th } month

No. 56.

Inter-Colonial Royal Mail Steam Packet Company (Limited),
Offices, 41, Moorgate Street,

London, E.C., 10th December, 1863.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I had the pleasure to receive in due course your favour of the 5th instant, the contents of which I carefully note.

As you agreed to accept only three vessels for the performance of the Panama service for the first year, it was assumed that it would be arranged in such a way as not to necessitate the employment of a larger fleet; but I have all along seen, that it could only be done by making the return boat leave Sydney three or four days earlier than would be otherwise necessary in order to reach Panama—not later than the 19th of the month; and by fixing the date of departure from the Isthmus for the 24th or 25th, an arrangement which beyond doubt would be regarded with disfavour by the colonists.

If the service is worked in the manner you suggest, it will be requisite for us to provide the fourth boat by March or April, 1865, instead of at the end of the year as at first proposed. I believe, however, there will be no difficulty in our doing this, as the Board are fully alive to the importance of making the service thoroughly efficient in all respects.

With regard to the dates named for the arrivals at and departures from Panama, my opinion is that at least 36 hours should be allowed for the transshipment of mails and cargo, &c., and the journey across the isthmus; in fact, I can hardly see how it would be possible to do it always in that time, unless the quantity of cargo is very small indeed.

The P. and O. Company are allowed 48 hours at Suez and Alexandria, and that would not be any too long for our boats. It is true the distance between these two places is greater than that between Colon and Panama; but when goods are once on the rail, it is almost as easy to convey them 100 miles as 40.

On the other hand, I see full well that the effect of such an arrangement would be to deprive Sydney of the opportunity of sending replies *via* Panama to letters received by that route, as the date of departure would be about the 30th, whereas that of arrival would be the 1st or 2nd. But I think this difficulty would eventually be got over, as there is every reason to expect that the ships we intend to furnish will traverse the distance between New Zealand and Panama in 28 days instead of 30, and probably the stay at Wellington may be made only 24 hours in lieu of 48.

On a careful review of all the circumstances, it occurs to me that the best thing to do will be to leave the adjustment of the Time-Tables until your return to the Colonies, when the matter can be settled with Captain Vine Hall. The delay, I apprehend, would not be of consequence, and it would afford ample time for consideration of the points in question.

I have, &c.,

JAMES WORLEY.

The Hon. Crosbie Ward,
&c. &c.

No. 57.

Inter-Colonial Royal Mail Steam Packet Company (Limited),
Office, 41, Moorgate Street,

London, E. C., December 10th, 1863, 2 p.m.

MY DEAR SIR,—

Since writing to you this morning, I have ascertained from the Royal Mail Company that, under their new contract, the mail packets will arrive at Colon on the 9th and 24th of the month, instead of the 7th and 22nd, and leave on the 7th and 22nd, instead of on the 9th and 24th—that is to say, the old plan is reversed.