

No. 6.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Wellington, 10th February, 1865.

SIR,—

A circular despatch, dated 25th November, 1864, has been received from Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, on the subject of postal communication, requesting a reply to be returned from the Colony not later than by the Mail leaving the Australian Colonies in February.

The despatch was received by the Postmaster General of New Zealand, on the night of the 9th instant, the Mail leaves this on the 12th. His Excellency the Governor being absent, it will be impossible for the New Zealand Government to communicate with the Secretary of State as requested till next month.

I have to request that you would obviate the inconvenience that may arise from this by informing Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies that it was impossible, for the reason given above, for the New Zealand Government to communicate with him within the time requested in his despatch.

I have, &c.,

FRED. A. WELD.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary,
New South Wales.

No. 7.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Sydney, New South Wales, 3rd March, 1865.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt, on the 27th ultimo, of your letter of the 10th February, and to inform you that the mail steamer "Madras," with the mail for England having sailed from Sydney on the 20th of last month, it was received too late to admit of the communication, which you desired to be made to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, being forwarded by that opportunity.

I have, &c.,

CHARLES COWPER.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary of
New Zealand, Wellington.

No. 8.

MEMORANDUM FOR HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR.

Ministers request His Excellency the Governor to inform Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies that the New Zealand Government has been unfortunately precluded from replying by the February mail, as specially requested by him, to his Despatch of 25th November, 1864, on the subject of the proposed arrangements regarding the conveyance of mails between Point de Galle and Sydney.

His Excellency being absent, it was only possible to reply indirectly through the New South Wales Government, and the Secretary of State's Despatch only reached the cabinet of New Zealand on the 9th of February, three days before the departure of the mail for Europe.

Ministers are unable, without the sanction of the Legislature, to pledge the Colony to any Contract necessarily involving large money liabilities which may be entered into by the Imperial Government. They will, however, lay the subject before the Assembly at the approaching session.

But as Her Majesty's Secretary of State may probably desire to know the views of the Colonial Government, Ministers must state that they are not prepared to recommend to the Assembly to accede, without stipulation, to the proposed arrangement. New Zealand is not, in their opinion, financially in a position to undertake so large and undefined liability as that indicated by the letter of Mr. F. Peel, enclosed in the Despatch of H.M. Secretary of State. The resources of the Colony have been heavily taxed by the expenses arising out of the Native Insurrection, and it has incurred a heavy liability by the Contract recently entered into for the conveyance of its mails by a line of steamers which it has subsidised to run from Panama to New Zealand, which service is to commence in January, 1866. It is the wish of the Government of New Zealand to extend the benefit of this service to the Australian Colonies, and an agent has been despatched to Australia for the purpose of entering into negotiations with them with a view to the accomplishment of that object.

Ministers entertain a hope that the Imperial Government will feel itself able to make or entertain