

service. It, or any of the other lines, would give New Zealand a service which would cost much less than the Panama Service or than the Suez Service (with Intercolonial and Interprovincial distributing boats) has cost, whilst, as compared with either, it would confer immeasurably greater advantages, direct and indirect. The Contractors propose to charge £85 for the through passage to England, including railway fare across the American Continent, and to leave to each passenger the option of proceeding direct, or of delaying at different places as long as may be desired. The Postmaster-General is informed, although it is not a condition of the contract, that a uniform rate to England is to be charged from all parts of New Zealand.

Should effect be given to the provision for the admission, duty free, into the United States of New Zealand flax and of wool the produce of New Zealand, or, of any Colony contributing towards the service, another inducement to the Australian Colonies to contribute will be supplied. It can scarcely be doubted that the establishment of the line will lead to the development of the New Zealand coal fields, in which case it would be no exaggeration to regard the subsidy as being more than recouped to the Colony by the money payments for its coal, and by the employment to labour and capital which would be afforded. The time table fixed for the commencement of the service is as follows:—To leave Port Chalmers, Sydney (if required), and London on the 1st of each month; Auckland on the 7th; and San Francisco on the 16th. This will enable letters despatched from London on the 1st of the month to be delivered in Port Chalmers on the 15th, and in Sydney on the 16th, of the following month. There will be about a fortnight for answering; and replies leaving Port Chalmers or Sydney on the 1st will reach London on the 15th of the following month, thus giving a "course of post" of about 105 days, or three months and a half. The same will apply to answers to letters sent from Port Chalmers or Sydney; in the case of Wellington or Auckland the time here stated will be reduced by several days. In conclusion, the Postmaster-General would observe that the contract appears to be one of an eminently satisfactory nature. It will stand the test of meeting the requirements of the whole Colony as a first-class mail, passenger, and commercial service; and if tested as regards its effect upon the much-discussed separate interests of the different parts of the Colony, the conclusion must be that no service more likely to do justice to those interests could be obtained, even if one could be devised.

Auckland, 24th November, 1870.

JULIUS VOGEL.

The following description of the vessels to be employed is taken from the American "Lloyds" for 1870:—

NEBRASKA.—The steamship Nebraska, 2,143 tons register, built in 1865, under official supervision, specially surveyed, and classed as extra A1 in 1869, built of oak and hackmatack on iron frame; three decks and beams; 15 feet draft; half brig rig; dimensions, 370 feet length, breadth 39 feet, depth 26 feet; beam engines, 81-inch cylinder, stroke of piston 12 feet; double planked with four inch oak; made 15½ knots on her trial trip.

NEVADA.—The steamship Nevada was built at the same time as the Nebraska; her tonnage is the same, and she is in every respect a similar vessel, except that her cylinder is four inches larger.

DACOTAH.—The steamship Dacotah, 2,153 tons register, was built in 1865, and specially surveyed and classed in 1869 as extra A1. She is similar in every respect to the Nebraska. At present she is employed in the trade between New York and the West Indies.

MOSES TAYLOR.—The Moses Taylor is 1,354 tons register, was built in 1857, and was resurveyed and classed as extra A1 in 1869.

No. 56.

AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT.

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME, GREETING:

WHEREAS, by an Act of the General Assembly of New Zealand, intituled "The New Zealand Post Office Act, 1858," it is enacted—"That it shall be lawful for the Postmaster-General, under such instructions as he shall from time to time receive from the Governor, to enter into any contract in writing from time to time on behalf of the Government of New Zealand, in the name of the Postmaster-General, for or in respect of the carriage or conveyance of mails by sea and by land, subject to such terms and conditions as he may think fit; and the Postmaster-General for the time being may sue or be sued on any such contract: Provided always, that no Postmaster-General shall be personally liable in respect of any such contract."

Now therefore, the Governor of New Zealand, in pursuance of the power and authority in him so vested, doth hereby authorize and instruct the Honorable Julius Vogel, the Postmaster-General of the Colony of New Zealand, to enter into a contract in writing, on behalf of the Government of New Zealand, for the carriage or conveyance of mails by sea, between San Francisco, in the United States of America, the Colony of New Zealand, and the Colonies of Australia, subject to such terms and conditions as he may think fit.

Given under the hand of His Excellency Sir George Ferguson Bowen, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Colony of New Zealand and its Dependencies, and Vice-Admiral of the same, at Government House, Auckland, this twenty-second day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy.

G. F. BOWEN.