

FURTHER PAPERS

RELATIVE TO THE

SAN FRANCISCO MAIL SERVICE.

In continuation of Papers presented 13th September, 1871.

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, BY COMMAND OF
HIS EXCELLENCY.

WELLINGTON.

—
1871.

SCHEDULE TO SAN FRANCISCO MAIL SERVICE PAPERS.

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FURTHER PAPERS RELATIVE TO THE SAN FRANCISCO MAIL SERVICE.

No. 131.

Mr. WEBB to the Hon. Mr. VOGEL.

United States, New Zealand, and Australia Mail Steamship Line Agency,
San Francisco, 2nd August, 1871.

SIR,—

When addressing you here under date of July 19th, 1871, I fully anticipated the pleasure of visiting New Zealand some time during the pending session of its Parliament.

Since your departure I have decided, after mature reflection, that it is absolutely necessary for me to spend most of my time remaining before the assembling of our Congress, early in next December, in this country.

Should I leave here in September, as I intended when writing you (and I could not leave sooner), it would be impossible for me to return in time to attend upon Congress, as is necessary, and as I am advised to do.

These circumstances preclude my coming, and you will therefore not expect me this year.

Mr. J. B. M. Stewart, to whom I have given authority to negotiate with your Government, is fully advised in regard to measures absolutely necessary, in my opinion, to make our line work successfully, having in view the hostile attitude assumed towards it by the New South Wales Government.

I have, &c.,

W. H. WEBB.

The Hon. Julius Vogel,
Postmaster-General, New Zealand.

No. 132.

Mr. STEWART to the Hon. Mr. VOGEL.

Auckland, 7th September, 1871.

SIR,—

Referring to our conversation relative to Mr. Webb's views upon the subject of a permanent mail service from New Zealand to San Francisco, I have the honor to inform you, that my visit to this country is to modify the present contract, so as to enable us to compete with the opposition from Australia.

The Governments of Australia have already voted £25,000 annually for the service, and it is important that we should not only be placed in a position, so that we can remove this opposition and tender to perform the same, and secure the subsidy.

As your Government participates in whatever subsidies are obtained from Australia, it will be plain to you that it is manifestly to the advantage of all concerned to grant us such modification, when we are able to bring sufficient boats from the Atlantic.

From the spirit of opposition shown in Australia, it will be apparent to you, that the Colonies inhabited by two million and a half of people will not be content with a branch service, and are determined to have a service terminating there.

While the contractors are well aware of their obligation to your Government to carry out the contract intact, beg to state that when the contract was made they were of opinion that Australia would be content with a branch service *via* Auckland; now that this anticipation has failed, they deem it advisable to ask you for such modification as will harmonize with the views of other Colonies, and prove materially beneficial, as well to your Government as to the contractors.

I have, &c.,

J. B. M. STEWART,

(for the U.S., N.Z., and A.M.S.S. Line.)

The Hon. Julius Vogel,
Postmaster-General, &c., &c.

No. 133.

The Hon. Mr. VOGEL to Mr. WEBB.

General Post Office, New Zealand, Wellington,
30th September, 1871.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 2nd August, in which you state that you are unable to visit New Zealand this year; and that Mr. Stewart is fully advised in regard to the changes which are necessary, in your opinion, to make the U.S., N.Z., and A.M.S.S. Line successful.

In reply I have the honor to state, that Mr. Stewart, on his arrival here, applied for permission to run the boats, for four trips, from Auckland to Sydney, on account of your not having sufficient vessels at present available to carry out the Mail Service between San Francisco and New Zealand and Australia, as contracted for. That permission was given.

Subsequently, when at Auckland on his way to San Francisco, Mr. Stewart addressed to me a letter in which he professes to state your views: which views, as they appear to me, virtually amount to this. That you are dissatisfied with the main point of the contract. I have not had an opportunity of answering that letter; and I am compelled to say, I think Mr. Stewart should have addressed it to me before he left Wellington. He has now returned to San Francisco; and from your letter, I understand that you do not propose to come to New Zealand.

I am glad to think that you intend to give your attention to the proceedings of Congress; and I presume you will include in that attention a consideration of the matter we have so often discussed, and which, by the contract, you have undertaken to give your best services to effect: I allude to the reduction of the Wool Duty. I attach as much importance as ever to this matter. I am convinced that the reduction will cause a very large trade to grow up between these Colonies and the United States, whilst there can be no doubt it will largely benefit the manufacturing interests of that country.

But, whilst I am anxious you should not lose sight of this matter, I am constrained to say that, in consequence of your not visiting New Zealand, the Government will be left without any one to represent the contractors during the negotiations which will be necessary with the Australian Governments. It seems to me that it will be impossible to negotiate with those Governments, and to enter into questions which will have to be considered as to modifications of details of the contract—although these modifications may be strictly in conformity with the terms of the contract—unless there is present, on behalf of the contractors, some person possessed of full and absolute authority to represent them. I have, therefore, the honor to request that you will either come to New Zealand, or without delay appoint some one to represent the contractors, so that the negotiations with the Australian Governments may be entered upon.

Had I not confidently relied upon your promise to come to New Zealand this month, I should have hesitated to grant the request made by Mr. Stewart; and I fear that through the contract steamer not proceeding to the Southern part of New Zealand in December, the Colony will be a serious loser in respect to the conveyance of wool to the United States.

I must beg you to understand most clearly, that the Government of New Zealand will require that the steamer which is due in Auckland on the 1st January, shall proceed thence to Port Chalmers, calling at the ports specified in the contract, and shall leave Auckland for San Francisco on the proper day, namely, the 25th January. This will allow of four trips being made from Auckland to Sydney, in accordance with the permission granted at the request of Mr. Stewart.

You must allow me to add, that correspondence on this subject will be useless; for I am able to inform you absolutely, that after the four trips on which the contractors are at liberty to run the steamers from Auckland to Sydney, the Government will require that the terms of the contract, unless varied by mutual consent, given in New Zealand, shall be strictly observed.

W. H. Webb, Esq., &c.

I have, &c.,
JULIUS VOGEL.

No. 134.

Mr. WEBB to the Hon. Mr. VOGEL.

SIR,—

New York, 30th August, 1871.

You will doubtless recollect that, at our late meeting in San Francisco, when reference was made to an early despatch of the steamer "Dacotah" to the Pacific Ocean, I stated I feared some alterations would be required to her machinery, to completely fit her for such long voyages as required by our contract.

Immediately on my return here from San Francisco, I called together a board of expert engineers expressly to determine this question.

The steamer "Dacotah" made only one voyage of about 4,000 miles, soon after her completion (about two years since) at which time her boilers did not work satisfactorily. These boilers were built on a new plan, intending to carry very high steam (60 lbs.), and the engine, in all its parts, extra strong, to bear the unusual strain consequent upon carrying so high a pressure of steam. A new system of valves and cut-off, was also introduced in the engine.

This board of experts, after much consultation and loss of time, have advised the entire removal of the present boilers and the substitution of another well-known and long-tried type, but to be built extra strong, so as to avail of the capacity of the engine for high steam. They also advise the adoption (not necessary, however) of a more simple and better understood system of steam valves, which involves the necessity of a new main cylinder and much additional expense.

I have decided to adopt all the recommendations of this board of experts, though, as you may imagine, very reluctantly; for the proposed alterations involve an outlay of about \$70,000,—but I shall have the satisfaction and the certainty of knowing, that when the work is completed, we shall have both engine and boilers of great power, entirely free from any element of experiment, and a steamer in every way well adapted to the service and capable of high speed.

The work is now in hand, and will be driven to completion as rapidly as possible; after which the "Dacotah" will be despatched to the Pacific without delay, say about the end of the present year or the beginning of the next.

I mention the above details that you may understand why the "Dacotah" cannot receive immediate despatch as intended, and trust that the statement will prove satisfactory.

There appeared to be little difficulty in the opinion of some of the most competent members of this board of experts in making the present boilers of the "Dacotah" work properly; but the fact of their construction being very new and complicated, as also the valve-gear of the main cylinder and their management not well understood by the only class of engineers whose services at sea can be had, together with the additional fact that the "Dacotah" will be employed on very long voyages, requiring high average speed, and at times far distant from a port of refuge, or place where repairs to machinery could be made in case of need, had very great influence—indeed, the chief influence—with

me, in arriving at the conclusion, to remove the present boilers and steam valves (though quite new and in perfect order) and replace them by others well known and easily understood by whoever may be employed to work them.

The "Dacotah" is of the same tonnage and model as the "Nebraska," and very similar in her internal arrangements.

Hon. Julius Vogel, Postmaster-General, Wellington,
New Zealand.

I have, &c.,
W. H. WEBB.

No. 135.

Mr. STEWART to the Hon. Mr. VOGEL.

SIR,—

Honolulu, 24th September, 1871.

Upon my arrival here I found a letter from Mr. Webb, informing me that business connected with this line had caused him to visit London, instead of your country.

I have the honor to call your attention to the fact that the contractors, Messrs. Webb and Holliday, are losing money rapidly, both in consequence of the small passenger traffic, and the refusal of the Australian Colonies to aid the line; and I beg of you to consider the question fully, and harmonize the interests of your country with that of the Australian, so that this line can be made first-class in every respect; and that it eventually may be made the great highway of travel between New Zealand and the Mother Country. I am fully satisfied a very few years will serve to make it self-supporting, but at present it requires aid from all quarters.

The contractors have no preference for any particular route, and it is their wish to keep the track that will satisfy all parties, so long as they may be able to get cheap coals and obtain the passengers.

I beg to call your attention to the fact that it is almost impossible to adopt the route through the Fijis with large steamships, as there are 200 miles of bad coral, which cannot be performed with safety at night, and, during four months of the year, subject to the most violent hurricanes; and that, should one of the steamers be lost, it would destroy the prestige of the line. It would, perhaps, answer the purpose better to connect Fiji by a small vessel with the Navigator Islands or Auckland.

It would be very little use in my going to Australia until you have settled what route is to be adopted, and until you have made up your mind as to the final terminus of the route; and in consequence I will return to San Francisco, and come back by the "Nebraska."

To the Hon. Julius Vogel, Postmaster-General,
Wellington.

I have, &c.,
W. B. M. STEWART.

