

call *en route* at an Australian port; and if you decide to go into the matter you will no doubt give this suggestion your consideration, and determine for what subsidy you would carry on a service so modified.

I venture to express the hope that I may be authorized next session to announce to the House that the Union Steam Ship Company is prepared to tender for either of the above services, should the House resolve to establish one of them.

I have, &c.,

WALTER W. JOHNSTON,  
Postmaster-General.

The Managing Director,  
Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand (Limited),  
Dunedin.

### No. 6.

Mr. MILLS to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

Union Steam Shipping Company of New Zealand (Limited).

Dunedin, 28th October, 1881.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your favour of 30th ultimo, *re* direct steam service between New Zealand and Great Britain.

The directors of this company have given the matter very careful consideration, and have forwarded a copy of your communication to the Managing Director, who is at present *en route* to England, desiring him while there to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the requirements of such a service as you propose, and to collect such information as will enable the directors to say definitely on what terms it would be possible to carry out a direct steam service fulfilling the conditions enumerated in your letter.

When possessed of the necessary particulars, the directors will again seek the honor of communicating with you.

I have, &c.,

D. MILLS,  
Acting General Manager.

The Hon. the Postmaster-General,  
Wellington.

### No. 7.

Sir F. D. BELL to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 25th November, 1881.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 8th and 10th October, on the question of steam communication.

I need not say that I am anxious to carry out your commands by completing at the earliest date the reports I am preparing for you, in order that the Government may have these before them for as long a time as possible prior to the meeting of Parliament. It was, however, only last week that the elaborate designs, which have been preparing at my request since August, for ships capable of doing the direct service, could be finished; and though I will not delay my reports a day longer than is necessary for the subject to be presented to you in as complete a shape as I can, the number and variety of the details to be considered are such that it is better for me to take time for their thorough examination rather than run the risk of supplying what might afterwards turn out to have been insufficient or inaccurate conclusions.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Wellington.

F. D. BELL.

### No. 8.

Sir F. D. BELL to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 2nd December, 1881.

SIR,—

I received this morning a letter, of which copy is annexed, from Mr. Coster, Chairman and Managing Director of the New Zealand Shipping Company, stating that he has made such arrangements in this country as will place that company in a position to establish an efficient direct steam service.

As I have not the least idea what those arrangements may be, I am unable to express any opinion upon the statements in Mr. Coster's letter. He has had several conversations with me on the subject of a steam service, but they have always been in the nature of inquiries as to the course which I was likely to recommend to the Government, rather than with the object of affording any real indication of what the New Zealand Shipping Company would be willing or able to do; and, although Mr. Coster has more than once informed me that he could make here, on behalf of the company, every financial or other arrangement necessary (including the building of the ships) to establish a direct service, I have not had the advantage of knowing anything from him, either as to the plans he has, or as to the mode in which he proposes to carry them out.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Wellington.

F. D. BELL.

### Enclosure in No. 8.

Mr. COSTER to Sir F. D. BELL.

The New Zealand Shipping Company (Limited),  
84, Bishopsgate Street Within, London, E.C., 1st December, 1881.

*Direct Steamers.*

SIR,—

Adverting to the various conversations which have passed between us on this subject, I have now the honor to intimate to you that I have made such arrangements in this country as will place this