

Since then, the mail service by the Peninsular and Oriental Company, under the expiring contract, has been performed in a way which has called forth general and strong complaint in all the Colonies; and remonstrances are understood to have been addressed to the Home Government on the subject by one or more of the Australian Governments.

Seeing then, that no opportunity was afforded for Colonial competition when the tenders were last called for, and that the service has for some time and is now being performed in a way that is most unsatisfactory to the Governments and communities of the Colonies interested, the Board of this Company venture to request that the Government of New Zealand will by the next mail urge upon the Home Government to immediately give to the Peninsular and Oriental Company the two years notice required to terminate the contract which commences on the 1st February, 1866, and forthwith call for tenders for a new contract, to commence at the expiration of the two years, giving full time for tenders being sent in by Colonial companies and firms.

In the event of this being done, I am instructed by my Board to say that tenders for the conveyance of the mails between Galle and Sydney will be sent in by this Company; and that, in these tenders, they will undertake to convey the mails at the rate of speed now stipulated for, and for a less sum than is being paid for the present service.

This company has for some time had contracts with the Governments of South Australia and Queensland for the conveyance of their respective English mails between Adelaide and King George's Sound, and between Sydney and Brisbane, and the Board think they are justified in saying that the manner in which these services have been carried out affords a satisfactory guarantee that any mail service undertaken by this company will be efficiently and faithfully performed.

The Hon. the Chief Secretary,
New Zealand.

I have, &c.,
SAMUEL CLARK,
Manager.

No. 4.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. GISBORNE to Mr. CLARK.

(No. 38.)

Colonial Secretary's Office,

SIR,—

Wellington, 8th February, 1866.

I have the honor, by direction of Mr. Stafford, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th ultimo, suggesting that in consequence of the unsatisfactory manner in which the Postal Steam Service between Great Britain and Australia is performed by the Peninsular and Oriental Company, the Home Government should be requested to give the necessary notice to that Company to terminate the new contract, and to allow in any fresh call for tenders, ample time for tenders being sent in by Colonial Companies and firms.

In reply, I am to state, that the New Zealand Government is in favour of the suggested notice being given to the Peninsular and Oriental Company, and that communications on this subject will be addressed to the respective Australian Governments.

S. Clark, Esq.,
Manager of the Australasian Steam Navigation Company,
Sydney.

I have, &c.,
W. GISBORNE,
Under Secretary.

No. 5.

Copy of Circular from the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD to the Hon. COLONIAL and CHIEF SECRETARIES of Australian Colonies and Tasmania.

(Circular No. 54.)

Colonial Secretary's Office,

SIR,—

Wellington, 12th February, 1866.

I have the honor to enclose for your information a copy of a letter dated the 5th ultimo, from the Manager of the Australasian Steam Navigation Company, suggesting that in consequence of the unsatisfactory manner in which the Postal Steam Service between Great Britain and Australia is performed by the Peninsular and Oriental Company, the Home Government should be asked to give the necessary notice to that Company to terminate the new contract, and to allow in any fresh call for tenders ample time for tenders being sent in by Colonial Companies and firms.

The extreme irregularity with which the service in question has been performed has entailed very considerable increased expenses to the Colony of New Zealand, for extra subsidies, for the conveyance from Australia of over due mails; and in some instances from the delay which has occurred there has been no time for replies by the return mail.

This Government is, therefore, prepared to act on this suggestion of the Australasian Steam Navigation Company, and will communicate to the Imperial Government to that effect. I shall feel obliged if you would be good enough to inform me of the views of the Government of New South Wales on this subject, and what course it proposes to take with reference to it.

The Hon. Colonial Secretary, New South Wales.

Similar letter sent to the Colonial or Chief Secretaries of Australia and Tasmania.

I have, &c.,
E. W. STAFFORD.

No. 6.

Copy of a Letter from the Hon. H. PARKES to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

(No. 66-1049.)

Colonial Secretary's Office,

SIR,—

Sydney, New South Wales, 6th March, 1866.

I have the honor to acknowledge the due receipt of your letter of the 12th ultimo, enclosing a copy of a letter from the Manager of the Australasian Steam Navigation Company, suggesting that