

Enclosure 2 in No. 1.

Mr. W. H. WEBB to J. P. ROXBURGH, Esq.

U.S., N.Z., and A.M.S.S. Line, 54 Exchange Place,
New York, 6th August, 1872.

SIR,—

Since writing my previous letter of this date, saying I would return to you the draft of the agreement forwarded by you from the A.S.N. Co., I have concluded it best to retain the one you sent to me, assuming you or the Company has a copy, and with the expectation that when mail-subsidy matters are definitely settled in the Colonies, we shall have occasion for the use of the document again.

J. P. Roxburgh, Esq., Exchange, Sydney.

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

No. 2.

Mr. W. H. WEBB to the Hon. J. VOGEL.

U.S., N.Z., and A.M.S.S. Line, 54, Exchange Place,
New York, 6th August, 1872.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of yours, dated Wellington, 11th May, 1872.

From this letter I received the first information that a time table for the commencement of the service provided for in the contract made between the Governments of Victoria and New Zealand, and Messrs. Webb and Holladay, for mail service between San Francisco and those Colonies, "had been suggested by the Postmaster-General of Victoria, and approved by the Postmaster-General of New Zealand, and a copy of the same forwarded to me."

I beg to assure you, in reply, that I have not received any time table from the Postmaster-General of Victoria, nor any letter or other communication from the Government of Victoria since the date of the signatures to the contract afore mentioned.

You will remember it was distinctly understood and agreed between the parties to that contract, at the time when it was concluded, that the Postmaster-General of Victoria should furnish me in good time with a time table for the new service, one that should conform to the time for the mails leaving London, and as near as possible to the dates then fixed for the New Zealand service.

Notwithstanding the non-receipt of the expected time table, and in the absence of any advice whatever from either the Government of Victoria or New Zealand regarding the ratification of the contract, I proceeded to prepare for entering on the service as required by the contract, and had advertised, both in this country and Europe, the steamer "Dakota," one of the steamers provided for in the contract, to sail from New York on the 12th instant direct for Melbourne *via* Cape Town. Her departure from New York on that date would enable her to arrive at the port of Melbourne in time to connect with the steamer commencing the service from San Francisco in September, 1872, the time provided in the contract for its commencement.

On the 16th ultimo, news was received at San Francisco, that the Duffy Ministry (one party to the contract) had been defeated, and the Parliament of Victoria would not ratify the Webb contract. This news was immediately telegraphed over the commercial world, and proved a terrible blow to our enterprise; but notwithstanding, I proceeded with my preparations to despatch the "Dakota" to Melbourne, waiting the arrival at New York of the mails, in the hope that my advices would afford sufficient encouragement for me to continue my preparations, notwithstanding the defeat of the Duffy Ministry. Unfortunately, when these advices from my agents and others in Australia came to hand, they fully sustained the news given in the telegrams sent from San Francisco, and placed me in a very unfortunate and harassing dilemma.

Information soon thereafter received from Melbourne, *via* Galle, and telegraphed to me from Europe, fully confirmed the news received *via* San Francisco. With such news in hand, and in the absence of any advices from either of the other contracting parties, and which I relied upon, I decided to alter my plans for the present, and change the destination of the "Dakota" to San Francisco instead of Melbourne, for reasons which will readily occur to you, place her in the line at that port under the contract with the New Zealand Government, and await advices from the Governments of Victoria and New Zealand regarding the ratification of the contract made with those Governments jointly.

The "Dakota" will be despatched from this port on the 12th instant direct for San Francisco, and on arrival there, will be placed on the line for mail service.

I am fully of the opinion that the existing circumstances justify the course I have adopted since the receipt of the news, and trust it will be, for like reasons, fully approved by the Government of New Zealand, one of the contracting parties.

Hon. Julius Vogel, Postmaster-General, Wellington.

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

No. 3.

Mr. W. GRAY to Mr. W. H. WEBB.

General Post Office, Wellington, 26th September, 1872.

SIR,—

I am directed by the Hon. the Postmaster-General to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th ultimo, in which you state that you had not been furnished with a copy of the time table promised by the Postmaster-General of Victoria; and, in reply, beg to enclose a copy of the time table referred to.

I am also requested to forward to you a copy of the report of the Mail Agent by the "Nebraska," and to direct your attention to the serious delays which occurred both on the outward and downward