

voyages ; and also to the remarks relating to the "Olympia," the steamer which connected at Honolulu with the "Nebraska."

I have, &c.,
W. GRAY,
(for the Secretary).

No. 4.

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 of 8th June, 1872, referring to the steamer "Nebraska" proceeding in April last to San Francisco, which requires no immediate reply. E. No. 2, 1872,
No. 34.

I have also to acknowledge the receipt of yours of 8th June, 1872, referring to my request for a modification of the schedule time between Auckland and Port Chalmers. E. No. 2, 1872,
No. 30.

I am still of the opinion that it is desirable my request should be granted ; but I propose to leave the matter on my part with Mr. Henry Driver, Inspector of the Line, for such adjustment as you may think best.

I have the satisfaction to be able to inform you that the steamer "Dakota," with extensive and very costly alterations to fit her for the mail service, will leave this port on the 12th instant direct for San Francisco, there to take her place on the line in November next.

Hon. Julius Vogel, Postmaster-General, Wellington.

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

No. 5.

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

U.S., N.Z., and A.M.S.S. Co.'s Agency, San Francisco,
10th September, 1872.

SIR,—

Your communication of 6th July, addressed to New York, came to hand on 28th August in San Francisco, where it had been detained to meet my expected arrival. E. No. 2, 1872,
No. 37.

I confess that I read with much surprise and mortification that you seem to think that I have wilfully encroached upon the generosity of your Government little by little, and pursued that course which satisfied my own convenience ; nor have I considered it necessary to make any explanations for delays.

In the first place, I may assure you that my agent in San Francisco is instructed, and in all cases deems it his duty, to forward mails promptly, regardless of expense and all other circumstances or interests, and I am quite satisfied that your mails are the chief object of his solicitude ; and if, in the matter of making explanations of delays he has been deficient, it was because his energies were more intently occupied in efforts to despatch the mails, and he trusted to your own agents to report the facts for your information.

You will bear in mind that these delays and substitution of steamers were, in all cases, emergencies which could not be foreseen ; and under the circumstances, it was quite impossible to consult your own or any other Government if any further loss of time was to be avoided.

I have prepared a table of such delays that you may see, however numerous and irritating they may be, it will show that they were of a character which could not be foreseen ; and our efforts to meet and overcome them were made in good faith, regardless of cost, or the unexpected losses they imposed upon us.

To take the example you quote, of the delay here from the 22nd to the 24th May—two days.

Owing to an accident (the cause of which to this day cannot be ascertained) to the "Mohonga," delaying her arrival at Honolulu, I ordered the "Nebraska" to bring up her mails to San Francisco, leaving orders for the "Mohonga" to remain idle, with her crew on board, at Honolulu for three weeks, to bring up the succeeding mails per "Nevada," which she did, reaching here on the 22nd May. She was at once discharged, coaled, and despatched.

The detention here was two days. On reference to a letter from Captain Blethen of the "Nevada," I find that he reports his ship "ready for sea at Auckland on her day, 18th April, but detained forty-eight hours by the Post Office Department ; and on arrival of the 'Wonga Wonga' a further detention was ordered by Mr. Vogel until the following day, the 21st, until the arrival of the 'Hero,' with Mr. Vogel on board, to enable him to forward important despatches, &c."

Thus it would seem that the delay of three days in Auckland might in justice, under all the circumstances, be made a reasonable explanation or offset of the consequent delay of two days in San Francisco ; but the consequent extra heavy expense falls on us only. Other explanations you will find in the table I herewith hand you.

It should not be overlooked that in order to regain, if possible, the time lost by the misfortunes of December, January, and February, our captains were ordered to drive their ships to their utmost, regardless of cost, when, if we had consulted our own convenience or interest only, we should have contented ourselves with not running any such risks as you attribute to our not having supplied a third suitable boat.

The third ship, the "Dakota," as you have been advised, I concluded would require more extensive changes to fit her for this service than was supposed at the time of making the contract.

All those changes were contracted for with the largest establishment doing such work in this country, before I set out for Australia ; and I have it in writing that she would be ready for sea before 1st January, 1872, so that she could take her place on the line last of March or April. Owing to