

of the Receiver and Accountant-General of this Department, but that, through a clerical error, which is much regretted, the balance in favour of the Colony on the account for the quarter ended the 30th June, 1870, was debited to that office in the account for the following quarter.

In compliance with your request, I beg to transmit to you the enclosed amended accounts.

The Postmaster-General, &c., Wellington.

I am, &c.,

WM. JAS. PAGE.

#### No. 4.

Messrs. McMECKAN, BLACKWOOD, and Co., to the Hon. JULIUS VOGEL.

SIR,—

Melbourne, 14th January, 1873.

Referring to your conversation with our Mr. Blackwood, we have the honor to state in this form that we will convey your English Mail by our steamers between New Zealand and this port under the following conditions, for the sum of £5,000 per annum for three years from the time of acceptance of this offer.

The steamer with the up-mail to leave Wellington nine days before the date of the P. and O. Company's steamer leaving Hobson's Bay, and to call at Picton, Nelson, and Hokitika, and at the Grey when the captain considers he can do so without much detention.

The above mails to be delivered,—

At Bluff	...	...	...	7 days
„ Port Chalmers	...	...	...	8 „
„ Lyttelton	...	...	...	9½ „
„ Wellington	...	...	...	10½ „
„ Nelson	...	...	...	12 „

from the arrival of the P. and O. Company's steamer in Hobson's Bay; but should it arrive more than two days before its due date, an equivalent in time to be added to the days named; for example, if a vessel arrives three days before her due date, then one day is to be added to the times within which we purpose to deliver the English mails at the New Zealand ports named. Our steamer to remain here two days beyond the due date in the event of the P. and O. Company's boat being late, but no longer.

This offer to include payment for all New Zealand mails carried by our steamers.

We have, &c.,

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

McMECKAN, BLACKWOOD, AND Co.

#### No. 5.

The Hon. J. VOGEL to Messrs. McMECKAN, BLACKWOOD, and Co.

GENTLEMEN,—

Menzies' Hotel, Melbourne, 14th January, 1873.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th instant, in which you state the terms on which you are willing to contract for a steam service to and from New Zealand ports and Melbourne, in connection with the Suez Mail Service.

In reply, I have the honor to state that your offer will be submitted to the New Zealand Government. The course which may be taken in respect to it will depend upon the decision arrived at in the ensuing Conference at Sydney, and upon the action of the New Zealand Parliament in connection therewith.

Messrs. McMeckan, Blackwood, and Co., Melbourne.

I have, &c.,

JULIUS VOGEL.

#### No. 6.

The Hon. J. VOGEL to Messrs. McMECKAN, BLACKWOOD, and Co.

GENTLEMEN,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 12th April, 1873.

Referring to your letter of the 14th January last, addressed to me whilst I was in Melbourne, and in which you made an offer to perform a mail service between Melbourne and New Zealand, I have the honor to state that that offer has been considered by the Government of this Colony.

I find that in one respect your letter is deficient; for whilst in its second paragraph you offer that the steamer conveying the up-mail shall leave Wellington nine days before the schedule date for the P. and O. boat leaving Hobson's Bay, there is no stipulation as to the time of your steamers leaving Port Chalmers and Lyttelton.

I am aware that your offer was made with a view to the Otago and Canterbury mails being carried overland to and from Hokitika. But considering that, occasionally, a landing at Hokitika cannot be effected, and that the road would often be very bad, it would be necessary, in any arrangement made with you, that there should be provision for the boats leaving Port Chalmers and Lyttelton within stated times of the departure date of the P. and O. boats.

It has suggested itself to me, however, that perhaps the best arrangement the Government could make with you would be one by which you simply undertook to deliver and to receive mails at a stated port, leaving the coastwise distribution to be effected by a separate service.

I have therefore the honor to request that you will inform me at what price you would be willing to contract to deliver and to receive New Zealand English mails at the Bluff and Port Chalmers, adhering to the times for the passage—seven and eight days respectively—stated in your letter of 14th January.