

be an unpleasant change. But the Directors submit with confidence that their experience of the work which can be prudently obtained from mail steamers can hardly be questioned. It is in no spirit of boastfulness that they point to the fact that their steamers have run during the last few years about thirteen millions of miles, not only without serious accident, but scarcely delivering a mail late, so that the India, China, Japan, and Australian mails have been delivered at their respective destinations with almost the same regularity as the Dublin or Paris mails are delivered in London. This result is achieved, not by chance, but by the most careful supervision, and particularly by dividing the work which each steamer has to perform. Less public attention than it deserves may have been bestowed on the Company's work, from the very certainty with which it has been performed; while the admirable passages and occasional mishaps of other steamers have probably given rise to more curiosity and higher expectations. But in looking at the working of any steam line, it will be well to have regard to the slow as well as the exceptional voyages, and to remember that casualties and irregularities are fatal to the commercial interest which a mail service is chiefly instituted to promote.

12. These observations will serve to explain the views of the Directors of this Company on a question to which they have given much attention, and which your Government is now called on to decide. That question really is, the principal future mail route between Australia and Great Britain. When the Directors look back at the history of mail communication with Australia, and the money wasted in promoting postal services, comparatively valueless, *viâ* the Cape of Good Hope, by Panama, San Francisco, and even on the route now occupied by the Company, when the service was placed in the hands of the European and Australian Steam Company, they feel some satisfaction in believing that the Company's performances compare most favourably with these experiments. They are therefore the more confident that the offer now submitted for the continuance and expansion of their work will be viewed as a liberal and enterprising effort on the part of the Company to meet the future postal requirements of the colonies in the most reliable and satisfactory manner—more particularly as the amount of the tender seems to assure to the Government of Victoria an absolute profit on the postage which such a line must secure.

I have, &c.,

A. M. BETHUNE,  
Secretary.

The Agent-General for the Government of Victoria, London.

#### No. 5.

The DEPUTY POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Melbourne, to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington.  
General Post Office, Melbourne, 18th November, 1879.

I have the honor, by direction of the Postmaster-General, to forward herewith for your acceptance four copies of time-table showing dates fixed for arrival and departure of English mails by the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company's steamers during 1880.

I have, &c.,

F. W. JACKSON,  
Deputy Postmaster-General.

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Wellington,  
New Zealand.

#### No. 6.

Mr. GRAY to the DEPUTY POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Melbourne.

SIR,— General Post Office, Wellington, 29th December, 1879.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th ultimo, forwarding four copies of the time-table for 1880 for the mail service between Melbourne and Colombo; and to inform you that this Colony will only avail itself of the services which connect with vessels of the Union Steamship Company under contract with this Department, and which will be the alternate services, commencing with despatch from Melbourne on January 23rd, and from London on January 16th, 1880. I beg to enclose six copies of the time-table for the San Francisco and Colombo services with New Zealand for next year.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY,  
Secretary.

The Deputy Postmaster-General, Melbourne.

By Authority: GEORGE DIDSBURY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1880.