

My Lords are of opinion that no better means are at their disposal for accomplishing the very important object which they have in view, and they are therefore prepared to accept the offer of the Royal Mail Steam Company.

Transmit copy of the Report of the Solicitor, and of this Minute to the Secretary to the Admiralty, and request that he will lay the same before the Lords of the Admiralty, and move their Lordships to cause the necessary steps to be taken for determining forthwith the existing Contract with the European and Australian Royal Mail Company, and for completing a proper agreement with the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company on the terms above stated.

State further that my Lords propose that public tenders shall be advertised for at as early a period as possible, for the performance of a Monthly Postal Communication with Australia, for a period of five years. But before this step be taken my Lords would be glad to be favored with the views of the Board of Admiralty on the subject of the system of penalties, which it is desirable should be laid down, and generally upon any points connected with the subject on which their Lordships may feel disposed to offer suggestions.

COPY OF A CIRCULAR DESPATCH FROM THE RIGHT HON. SIR E. B. LYTTON, BART.,
TO GOVERNOR GORE BROWNE, C.B.

Downing Street,
16th October, 1858.

SIR,—

16th October,
1858
Printed Table

I have great satisfaction in transmitting herewith, for your information, the copy of a Letter which has been received from the Board of Treasury by which you will perceive that the Lords Commissioners have entered into arrangements with the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, which it is trusted, will secure to the Colonies a regular and efficient Postal Communication with this Country.

I have &c.,

(Signed) E. B. LYTTON.

Governor Gore Browne, C.B.,
&c., &c., &c.
New Zealand.

SIR C. TREVELYAN, TO MR. MERIVALE.

Treasury Chambers,
16th October, 1858.

SIR,—

(Enclosure.)

The Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury have directed me to acquaint you, for the information of Secretary Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, that the steps which they have taken for procuring a new Mail Service between this country and Australia have resulted in the acceptance of the Tender of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, upon terms which my Lords trust will be considered satisfactory to the Colonies.

It was not without difficulty and considerable discussion that a decision could be arrived at, but in the arrangement which their Lordships have now sanctioned will be found, as they believe, a reasonable guarantee for securing to the Colonies a regular and efficient Postal Service, with a course of Post as rapid as it is possible to obtain, and at the same time as far as practicable in conformity with the special requirements and expressed wishes of each Colony.

The Contract will be executed without delay and will be communicated to the Colonies through the Secretary of State, but in the meanwhile it will be desirable to inform them of the general features of the new Service, and my Lords request therefore that Sir E. B. Lytton will cause the necessary communication for this purpose to be addressed to the different Governments by the Mail of this evening, and that they may be furnished with the Time Tables, printed copies of which will be forwarded to you without delay.

It is intended that the Contract shall be for seven years, commencing with the February Mail from Sydney, and that the Service shall include both on the homeward and outward voyages, Mauritius, King George's Sound, Kangaroo Island, Melbourne, and Sydney,—thus placing on the main line, under all circumstances, the four Australian Colonies, Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales, leaving only Tasmania and New Zealand to be supplied with branch Services, and in the case of the latter Colony at least, this has been already established.

The annual sum for which the company undertake the Service is one hundred and eighty thousand pounds (£180,000) exclusive of the payment of £24,000 a year, which my Lords presume the Colony of Mauritius will be willing to continue for a Service better than the one which they now possess, and which, my Lords hope will fully meet the wishes of the Colony as expressed in Governor Stevenson's Despatches of the 14th December, 1857, and 7th January, 1858.

The Company will bind themselves to perform the Service between the extreme ports, namely, Sydney and Southampton, both in the outward and homeward voyages in a maximum time of fifty-five (55) days, and a Time Table has been carefully formed according to which ample time will be afforded for answering Letters in the proper course of Post.

It is intended that the Contract shall contain, in addition to the clauses enforcing penalties for the non-fulfilment of engagements of the Company, stipulations prescribing the application of the severest test by the Admiralty to ensure the perfect fitness of the vessels destined to be employed on the Service.