

of the bonds for the performance of the contracts for the conveyance of mails between San Francisco and the Colonies of New Zealand and New South Wales, and the reasons for their being framed as they are.

Messrs. John Mackrell and Co.,
21, Cannon Street, London, E.C.

I have, &c.,
J. WARBURTON
(for the Secretary).

No. 15.

Mr. T. RUSSELL to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

SIR,—

London, 29th November, 1873.

I have the honor to enclose a letter addressed to Mr. Samuel and myself by the contractors, soliciting, under certain circumstances narrated in the letter, an extension of time for beginning the permanent mail service between New Zealand and San Francisco, and a copy of the reply given to them by Mr. Samuel and myself. In addition to what is stated in our reply, I beg to inform you that I made inquiry from competent persons, and found that twelve months was too short a time to allow the contractors for building four such steamships as those they have given orders for; but my telegram to you of 27th August had then been despatched. Twelve months was the time mentioned in it for the commencement of the contract, and as my authority followed the words of my telegram, it did not permit my giving them a longer period. The contractors have done all that has been possible to procure delivery of the ships within the prescribed time—they contracted for building the four vessels, as stated in their letter, before the permanent mail contract was signed, and, to insure a speedier delivery, they divided the building of the vessels between two eminent firms of shipbuilders, so that I feel sure, if they make the temporary service an efficient one, and really require two or three months extension of time to get the large ships on to the station, that the Government of New Zealand will deal liberally with them in this respect.

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
THOMAS RUSSELL.

Enclosure 1 in No. 15.

Mr. H. H. HALL to the Hon. SAUL SAMUEL and Mr. T. RUSSELL.

DEAR SIR,—

London, 27th November, 1873.

We have, as you are aware, entered into contracts for building four steamships for the mail service between San Francisco and the colonies, in terms of our engagement with you, but we think it will not be possible to get all four ships on the station within the twelve months mentioned in our contract. As you know, we made the contracts with the builders before we signed the permanent contract with you, and to insure speedy delivery we gave two ships only to each builder. The best builders in Great Britain have been selected to build the ships, viz., Messrs. J. Elder and Co., of Glasgow, and Mr. James Laing, of Sunderland. We expect all four ships will be launched by June, 1874. The ships will be of the very highest class, and will cost us here £93,000 each. We could have got ships ready for the service in less time, but they would not have been what we desired to have, to insure the success we mean to aim at in the permanent service. The contractors are bound down in the most stringent manner, but there are provisos, viz., strikes, locks, &c., which may cause detention for a few months. What we now desire is, that you will obtain from your Governments permission for us to continue our temporary service for two or three months over our contract time, the 27th November, 1874, should we, from unforeseen circumstances, require that extension. Of course, if this concession is given to us, we will consent to the subsidies for the extended time being reckoned according to the scale in the schedule to the permanent contract.

We are, &c.,

For the Contractors,
H. H. HALL.

The Hon. Saul Samuel, Postmaster-General for New South Wales.

Thomas Russell, Esq., Special Agent for the Postmaster-General for New Zealand.

Enclosure 2 in No. 15.

The Hon. Mr. SAMUEL and Mr. T. RUSSELL to Messrs. HALL and FORBES.

GENTLEMEN,—

London, 27th November, 1873.

We have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this day's date, asking us to represent to our respective Governments your request for extension of time, under the circumstances stated in your letter.

We recognize the promptness with which you have entered into the contracts for building the new ships, and the liberal efforts you are making to insure success. We have made inquiry, and find that the time given you is barely sufficient to insure delivery on the station, and though we cannot promise anything further, we shall represent the facts to our respective Governments; and we have no doubt if, from unforeseen circumstances, you actually require two or three months more to get the new ships to the station, the Governments of New South Wales and New Zealand will deal liberally with you.

We have, &c.,

SAUL SAMUEL,

Postmaster-General of New South Wales.

THOMAS RUSSELL,

For the New Zealand Government.

To Messrs. Hall and Forbes.