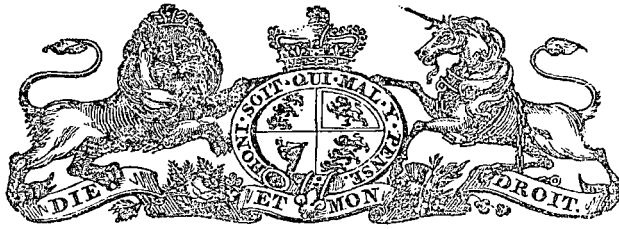


(No. 65.)



1858.

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T A S M A N I A.

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**ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH.**

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E.

*Return to an Order made on the 20 October. (Mr. Balfe.)*

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Laid upon the Table by Mr. Colonial Treasurer, and ordered by the House to be printed, 26 October, 1858.



*Daily Mercury Office, 17th June, 1858.*

SIR,

HAVING partially made my arrangements with a person in George Town to forward my Messages to me by Electric Telegraph, (the Honorable the Premier having kindly promised that such agent, when appointed, should have the privilege of proceeding on board the steamer in the Government boat), I wish to enquire, before finally completing those arrangements, whether the Government, in such a case, will continue to receive Messages from the Officer of the Telegraph, and sell them to the Journals here; or, in other words, whether the Government intends to enter into competition with my private enterprise?

Of course I am not in a position to compete with the Government in a matter of this kind. The Official Message, for instance, would be sent before mine; and the other Journals would thus anticipate me in every instance, rendering my Messages utterly valueless, although obtained by me at a greater cost than theirs.

I shall, therefore, be glad if you will inform me whether, in the event of my completing the arrangements for having my Messages transmitted by my own Agent at George Town, the Government will continue to compete with me by having similar Messages to mine forwarded by its own Officer for sale to the other Journals? If so, it will be useless for me to incur the additional expense.

I have the honor to be,  
Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,  
JOHN DAVIES.

*J. R. BALL, Esq., Acting Superintendent of Telegraphs.*

*Electric Telegraph Office, 26th June, 1858.*

SIR,

IN reply to your letter of the 17th instant, I am directed to acquaint you, that while of course any Message addressed to yourself is your private property, and will be respected as such, the Government will not sanction the employment of any Officer of the Telegraph as the correspondent of any newspaper; and will discountenance, as a mere evasion of that rule, the engagement in that capacity of any member of the family of a Telegraph Officer. I am further to add, that the course at present in operation, by which the reports addressed to this office are available for any journals whose proprietors may choose to pay for them, is intended by the Government only to apply to places at which there are not, or cannot be found, agents for any newspaper, but from whence it is, at the same time, desirable that the public should be able to receive intelligence.

I have the honor to be,  
Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

J. REYNOLDS BALL, *Acting Inspector.*

*Mr. JOHN DAVIES, Mercury Office, Hobart Town.*

*Daily Advertiser Office, Hobart Town, 20th July, 1858.*

SIR,

HAVING enquired at the Telegraph Office this morning whether any Message was coming over as usual, I was, to my surprise, informed by the Superintendent that the Messages had been discontinued.

As the Colonial Treasurer, Mr. Innes, is out of town, I beg to represent to you that this alteration has been made without any communication with me; and that, relying on the Government receiving the usual Message, I have made no other arrangement for procuring one.

I have to submit, therefore, that Messages should be procured until I have had time to make other arrangements.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

C. W. HALL.

*The Honorable the Attorney-General.*

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20th July, 1858.

MR. BALL,

As it appears that any alteration which has been made in the arrangement by which Messages were receivable from George Town available for the public here has not been notified so as to enable parties to make their own arrangements, Mr. Ball will, till the Colonial Treasurer's return to town, and no longer without his sanction, allow Messages to be delivered according to the former practice.

FRANCIS SMITH.

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20th July, 1858.

THE first occasion on which a Government Report for sale to the different journals was not received (since the commencement of that arrangement) was on the last arrival of the steamer *Black Swan*. As I then for the first time received a Message direct from Melbourne to the *Mercury*, I reported the circumstance, and received instructions to discontinue the Government Report; and when the *Advertiser's* Reporter applied, I told him "that there would be no Government Message." On the arrival of the *Royal Shepherd* last week I received a similar application and gave a similar reply, so that there can be no doubt that the *Advertiser* knew of the discontinuance of the arrangement, although I did not give them any official notification of it.

J. REYNOLDS BALL.

*The Honorable the Attorney-General.*

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*Attorney-General's Office, 20th July, 1858.*

SIR,

As it appears, from a communication received from Mr. Ball in reference to the subject of your letter of this morning, that the Proprietors of the newspapers in Hobart Town have been aware, since the last arrival of the *Black Swan*, of the discontinuance of the practice by which Government Messages from George Town were available to the public here, I do not feel justified in interfering with the arrangements of the Telegraph Department.

I have, &c.,

FRANCIS SMITH.

C. W. HALL, *Esq.*

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*Advertiser Office, 20th July, 1858.*

SIR,

IN reply to your letter just received, I beg to say that I was not aware that the Messages from George Town were discontinued: that I went down, as usual, this morning, to get a Message, and was then, for the first time, informed by Mr. Ball that the practice

had been discontinued. I am unwilling to believe that the Honorable the Colonial Treasurer would act in so discourteous a manner as to make a different arrangement without communicating with me on the subject. If arrangements are to be made, and thus put an end to without any information being vouchsafed to those most interested, there will be but little faith to be put in matters of business with the Government. I am, however, unwilling to believe that the Honorable the Colonial Treasurer so acted, and think Mr. Ball must have misunderstood his instructions.

I have the honor to be,  
Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

C. W. HALL.

*The Honorable the Attorney-General.*

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20th July, 1858.

WILL Mr. Ball have the goodness to state distinctly whether, on the occasions to which he refers in his former memorandum, he gave the Reporter of the *Advertiser* to understand that the practice of receiving Government Messages for the Press was discontinued, as Mr. Hall states that he was not aware of that fact?

FRANCIS SMITH.

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20th July, 1858.

I MERELY answered the question in the words I have stated. I did not distinctly say that *no more* Government Messages would be issued. I feel perfectly certain, however, that, if Mr. Hall did not know that such would be the case, his Reporter did, from observations he has made on the subject. I may add, that those in the office are perfectly aware that the fact, and the circumstances connected with it, were known, if not to Mr. Hall, at all events to his Reporter.

J. REYNOLDS BALL.

*The Honorable the Attorney-General.*

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*Attorney-General's Office, 21st July, 1858.*

SIR,

THE *Black Swan* having arrived, it is unnecessary for me to give any immediate decision upon the question raised in your letters of yesterday respecting the Electric Telegraph.

For a final determination of the matter, I beg to refer you to the head of the Department, the Colonial Treasurer.

I have, &c.,

FRANCIS SMITH.

C. W. HALL, *Esq.*

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*Attorney-General's Office, 21st July, 1858.*

MY DEAR SIR,

ENCLOSED is a Correspondence between your Department and Mr. John Davies respecting the Electric Telegraph; and also a Correspondence on the same subject which has taken place in your absence between Mr. Hall and myself.

I forward them to you in order that you may be acquainted with the circumstances in the event of Mr. Hall addressing you further in the matter.

Yours very faithfully,

FRANCIS SMITH.

*The Honorable the Colonial Treasurer.*