

No. 2.

Mr. GRAY to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 25th June, 1880.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 8th April last, enclosing copy of a letter addressed to the Agent-General for New South Wales and yourself by the President of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, in reply to your joint letter of 1st March last to the company, with respect to the earlier departure of the mails from San Francisco.

Sir Julius Vogel, K.C.M.G.,
Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

I have, &c.,
W GRAY,
(for the Postmaster-General.)

No. 3.

Messrs. WILLIAMS, DIMOND, and Co. to Mr. GRAY.

SIR,—

Agency Pacific Mail Steamship Company, San Francisco, 6th June, 1880.

We have the honor to own receipt of your valued favour dated 22nd April,* and respectfully tender our thanks to the honorable gentlemen of your department for their kind appreciation of our efforts to promote the interests of the citizens of New Zealand by the course we adopted to avert inconvenience accruing from the unfortunate accident to the steamer "City of Sydney;" also for their generous conclusion not to subject us to any pecuniary loss on that account, in view of our having, after the occurrence of the disaster, used our best endeavours to make up the time lost, by ordering our commander to press his ship and exercise unremitting diligence during the outward voyage.

We avail of this opportunity to forward to you extracts from the correspondence of the President of this company, just received at this office, which, while recognizing the generous liberality of the Postal Department of New Zealand, make reference to other points, which we deem it important you should consider.

Our President writes, "New York, 28th May, 1880.—The arrival of s.s. 'Zealandia' on the 18th instant, and your prompt despatch of her mails, noted with pleasure. They reached this city at 6 a.m. of the 25th instant, and Postmaster James had the New South Wales mails transferred to the 'Arizona,' the crack ship of the Guyon Line, by a tug down the bay. We understand that New Zealand mails went on the 'Gallia' the 26th only, because the New Zealand authorities designate the Cunard, Inman, or White Star steamers only, and that, in consequence, the New Zealand mails will probably arrive in London this time about two days after those of New South Wales, as the 'Arizona' has beaten 'Gallia's' line so far every trip. Please mention this to our colonial friends, and suggest that our worthy Postmaster is wide awake, and his discretion and impartiality can safely be trusted in all such matters, as he always has done his best to co-operate with us in giving the promptest despatch to the English mails. The copy of the letter of the Hon. W Gray, forwarded by you, has had our careful attention. Kindly express to the Colonial Government our appreciation of the justice evinced in their reply to our request forwarded through your good selves.—J B. HOWETON, President."

Referring to the letters interchanged between this agency and your department in reference to changing our sailing-days from Mondays to Saturdays, and thereby empowering us to deliver your mails two days in advance of present schedule time, we beg to say our success in carrying out that proposition, which was made solely with the intention of improving the popularity of our route, and giving increased mail facilities to your good people, depended for success solely on the postal officers of London complying with our request to start the colonial mails from that city on Tuesdays instead of Thursdays as at present; also in their selection of swiftest steamships between Liverpool and New York to bring the mails to this continent. The proposed change would in no way have incommoded our passengers or ourselves, and would have given us much gratification in feeling that we were contributing to the welfare of your good citizens. But, as no effort has yet been made to change the day of starting the mails from London as above indicated, we doubt the utility or propriety of continuing to advertise that the steamers will sail hence on Saturdays.

We have, &c.,

WILLIAMS, DIMOND, AND Co.,
General Agents.

W Gray, Esq., Secretary, General Post Office,
Wellington.

No. 4.

Mr. GRAY to Messrs. WILLIAMS, DIMOND, and Co., San Francisco.

GENTLEMEN,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 8th July, 1880.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th ultimo, having reference to the late fire on board the "City of Sydney," the transport of New Zealand mails across the Atlantic homewards, and the recent alteration made in the day of departure of the mail steamers from San Francisco, with the view of shortening the time occupied in the transit of mails between London and Auckland and Sydney.

Passing to the consideration of the last-mentioned subject, I am directed to point out to you that in your original proposal there was no mention of any desire for an alteration in the day of despatch from London. In your letter of the 16th January last, you stated that the last of the English through mails had frequently arrived in San Francisco on Saturday night, and that a recent change on the railroad route between San Francisco and Sacramento had shortened the distance between the two

* Vide No. 51 of F.—2, 1880.