

No. 9.

The RESIDENT AGENT for NEW ZEALAND, San Francisco, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

SIR,—

San Francisco, 20th August, 1898.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your communications of the 15th of July [Nos. 23 and 25, F.—6A, 1898], with enclosure in reference to the delay to the steamer "Aorangi's" mail of April last, by which it is stated that the "Aurania" was delayed in New York two days by danger in the bay from torpedoes, and asking whether I am in a position to confirm this statement.

I would state, in reply, that I am not able to either confirm or deny this statement. I would state, however, that during my late visit to New York, and while referring to this and other delays complained of to the Superintendent of the Post Office (mail department), no reference to any delay of this nature was mentioned; and it is rather difficult for me to understand how a delay of the extent mentioned could have occurred from this cause. The port of San Francisco is also mined, but no delays have occurred on that account.

The other matters touched upon in your communications have been anticipated by previous communications.

I have the honour to report that the R.M.S. "Aorangi" is reported to have arrived at Victoria at midnight on the 11th instant from Honolulu, with measles on board, and to have been placed in quarantine. As a consequence the mails did not leave Vancouver until Saturday, the 13th instant. There being no steamer leaving New York until to-day (Saturday), there will be a delay of some five days in the through transit. This is most unfortunate, as if the mails had arrived at New York on Tuesday they could by some little pressure (which I proposed making) have caught the fast "Kaiser Wilhelm de Grosse," and made a very fast trip, and thus reduced the average for the year. I am advised, however, that the mails left New York to-day per "Campania," so I trust some of the lost time will be recovered by the time they reach England.

I have, &c.,

W. Gray, Esq.,
Secretary, Post and Telegraph Department, Wellington.

H. STEPHENSON SMITH,
Resident Agent.

No. 10.

The Hon. the PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 13th September, 1898.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 30th July last, forwarding copy of one received from the liquidator of the Canadian-Australian Royal Mail Steamship Company, with reference to the late arrival at Vancouver of the mails for Australasia forwarded by the "Aurania" on the 16th idem. The inquiries by the Post Office show that the delay was really due to the "Aurania" making a long passage and not arriving at New York until 5 p.m. on the 24th July. Her mails, which could not be forwarded from New York until 8.45 the following morning, reached Vancouver at 1 p.m. on the 30th.

I trust that it may be possible to arrange for the Vancouver mails being conveyed by faster steamers than the "Aurania," which on the occasion in question took about eight days to make the passage across the Atlantic.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. W. P. Reeves,
Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

W. C. WALKER,
For the Premier.

No. 11.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to the RESIDENT AGENT for NEW ZEALAND, San Francisco.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 13th September, 1898.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 30th July last [No. 27, F.—6A, 1898], reporting the result of your observations during your recent journey with the Australasian mails from Vancouver to New York.

I have to thank you for your very complete report, from which I am pleased to learn that there is little fault to be found with the overland transit of the mails.

The Vancouver office has been asked to advise the officer in charge of the United States railway mail-service at Minneapolis when the train with the Australasian mails leaves Vancouver; while your suggestion as to placing the mails in charge of the Canadian postal officials has been brought under the notice of the office at Ottawa, with a request that it be given effect to.

The question of fixing the most suitable days for the arrival of the steamers at Vancouver, so as to insure a good connection with the fast steamers at New York, will be fully considered when next year's time-table is being framed.

I have, &c.,

H. Stephenson Smith, Esq.,
Resident Agent for New Zealand, San Francisco, Cal.

W. GRAY,
Secretary.

No. 12.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to the POSTMASTER, Vancouver.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 13th September, 1898.

I have the honour to inform you that Mr. H. Stephenson Smith, Resident Agent in San Francisco for this colony, who left Vancouver on the 14th July last for New York with the Australasian mails, reports that as the connection of the through mails at Minneapolis is extremely