

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.,

W. C. WALKER, for the Premier.

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

No. 227.

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

SIR,— Resident Agency for New Zealand, San Francisco, 18th September, 1898.

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I have again to report a hitch in the homeward conveyance of the mails *via* Vancouver. The R.M.S. "Miowera," due at Vancouver on the 8th instant, did not reach that port until the 10th. Consequently the mails again missed the fast steamer "Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse" from New York on Tuesday, and only left New York yesterday per "Campania."

I have, &c.,

H. STEPHENSON SMITH, Resident Agent.

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

No. 228.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the PREMIER.

(Telegram.)

London, 28th September, 1898.

IMPERIAL Post Office threatens forward by Federal mail-service correspondence posted during the week after San Francisco mail-service. Have strongly objected. By next mail send full statement of times in which Vancouver service Federal service mails have been received Auckland during this year, also any other information necessary.

No. 229.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, London, to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington.

SIR,— General Post Office, London, 30th September, 1898.

At page 14 of the appendix to the annual report of the Post and Telegraph Department of New Zealand for the year 1897 [see F.—1, 1898] there appears a table showing the number of days occupied in the delivery of mails for New Zealand despatched from this office up to the 25th December, 1897, for conveyance from Brindisi by the packets of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company.

The Postmaster-General would be much obliged if you would be so good as to let him have a continuation of this table brought up to the present time.

I am, &c.,

The Postmaster-General, Wellington.

A. B. WALKLEY, for the Secretary.

No. 230.

The Hon. the PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 6th October, 1898.

In reply to your message of 28th: Federal mail week after Frisco reaches Auckland six to eight days before Vancouver. Steamers leave Sydney same day Federal mails due, but liable to change. Vancouver arrivals irregular. If no improvement Vancouver three four months' time, will consider whether all correspondence week after Frisco sent Federal. Meantime urge no change. Statement posted Frisco mail.

No. 231.

The Hon. the PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 11th October, 1898.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your telegram of the 28th ultimo.

I have also to confirm my reply of the 6th instant.

I may explain that when the Pacific time-tables were being arranged it was assumed that, unless very close connection were made at Melbourne or Sydney, the correspondence by the Federal service leaving London the week before the Vancouver mail would reach the colony three or four days earlier than the latter mail. The Federal mails are now due at Sydney on the Wednesday, and generally arrive on that day or earlier, and, as the weekly steamer for Auckland at present leaves on Wednesday, there has been almost invariably close connection, with the result