

maintenance of the service, and it may therefore be claimed that the position of the United States to the San Francisco service is analogous to that of Canada in respect to the Vancouver service; and for your information I have to state that the payments to the contractors for the maintenance of the San Francisco service last year were: By the United States, £28,125; New Zealand, £8,564; New South Wales, £4,000.

In view of the fact that the resolutions already mentioned were the basis of the two contract services, intended to place both the San Francisco and Vancouver contractors on an identical footing in their relations with this colony, you will no doubt realise the difficulties which may ensue were your department to retain the sea-rates collected from other countries on correspondence for New Zealand.

It must be recognised that, were not New Zealand a party to the contract, correspondence for this colony from Great Britain, &c., would not have been forwarded by the Vancouver service, and consequently the sea-rates now claimed on behalf of the contractors would not have accrued.

On further reviewing the whole of the circumstances of the position, the Postmaster-General ventures to hope that you will consent to pay over the sea-rates for the benefit of the contractors.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Ottawa.

W. GRAY, Secretary.

No. 234.

The SUPERINTENDENT of FOREIGN MAILS, Washington, to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington.

Post Office Department, Office of Foreign Mails, Washington, D.C.,
29th October, 1898.

SIR,—

Referring to your letter of the 21st ultimo [No. 16, F.—6B, 1898], stating that you had been advised that the homeward Australasian mails which arrived at Vancouver by the steamer "Aorangi" in May last were delayed at New York through the detention there of the steamer "Aurania" for two days owing to danger in the bay from torpedoes, and inquiring if the "Aurania" was detained as reported and for the cause stated, I have the honour, by direction of the Postmaster-General, to inform you that the agents in New York of the steamer "Aurania" state, in reply to this department's letter on the subject, as follows, viz.:—

"The ship left her dock 24th May at 10.24 a.m., as scheduled, encountered dense fog in lower bay, and was obliged to anchor at 11.30 a.m. The fog continued, but ship got under way 3.50 p.m. 25th, hoping to be able to proceed to sea, but after she had gone a short distance the fog was so dense she again anchored at 4.48 p.m., and was further detained by the fog until 5.45 a.m. 26th, when she succeeded in getting out over the bar and proceeded to sea, clearing the bar at 6.55 a.m.

"The inquiry is probably caused by the fact that the "Germanic," which left her dock on the 25th, got to sea the same afternoon, which fact may be explained by her drawing some 2 ft. less water, which enabled her to get out without waiting for the tides, or the fog may not have been so dense where she happened to be.

"I beg to assure you that the delay was caused entirely by the fog, and from no mishap to the ship."

I have, &c.,

N. M. BROOKS,
Superintendent of Foreign Mails.

The Postmaster-General, Wellington, New Zealand.

No. 235.

The Hon. the PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 3rd November, 1898.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th September last, forwarding copy of correspondence with the General Post Office, London, on the subject of payment for the sea-conveyance of mails forwarded *via* Vancouver.

In reply, I beg to inform you that the amounts were included in the accounts to London in the belief that the Canadian Post Office would agree to pay over the sea-rates for the benefit of the contractors. So far this has been refused, but the correspondence has not yet been closed. The overcredit will be adjusted in the next quarter's accounts.

I should be glad if you would suitably inform the Post Office authorities.

I have, &c.,

W. C. WALKER, for the Premier.

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

No. 236.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to the GENERAL MANAGER for the COLONIES, New Zealand Shipping Company, Christchurch.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 11th November, 1898.

I have the honour to refer to your letter of the 8th July last [No. 20, F.—6A, 1898], in connection with the delay in New York Harbour to the "Aurania" with the homeward mails *via* Vancouver, which left Wellington by the "Aorangi" on the 28th April, and to inform you that the Secretary of the General Post Office, London, advises the Agent-General for this colony