

connect with the steamers of the American line from New York to Southampton. I enclose copy of your message, and also of my reply by cable on the 13th instant.

The decision of the London Post Office to forward all mail-matter for New Zealand by the intermediate Federal mail prejudicially affects the value of the Vancouver service to the colony as an alternative fortnightly mail line, as hereafter each mail will comprise only eight days' instead of a fortnight's correspondence. I concluded, however, that a further protest would be of no avail, especially as considerable public pressure appears to have been brought to bear in the matter. I shall be obliged, however, by your pointing out the position to the London Post Office authorities, and giving them to understand that, in the event of any change in the running of the intercolonial service delaying the delivery of the Federal mail in the colony, I shall expect that the former practice of sending only specially marked correspondence by the eastern route should again be reverted to.

With respect to the homeward Vancouver mails connecting with the steamers of the American line at New York, I would remind you that the time-table was framed to provide for such a connection on the Wednesday. This, however, has seldom been made, owing to prolonged passages on the Pacific; and if the improved running which is now looked for at this end is not to take place an earlier departure from Wellington will have to be considered. Meanwhile the Post Office is in communication with the Canadian postal authorities, with a view to saving time at Vancouver and other points on the Canadian overland route, and the New Zealand Shipping Company has also been urged to reduce all stoppages *en route* to a minimum, and to use every effort to deliver the mails at Vancouver in time for despatch by the Thursday's train leaving at 1 p.m. for Chicago.

It is somewhat reassuring to learn that the "Miowera's" homeward mails of the 10th ultimo were delivered in London on the 14th instant, due date; and I trust that regular delivery may hereafter be the rule rather than the exception.

I have, &c.,

R. J. SEDDON.

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

No. 252.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to the MANAGER, New Zealand Shipping Company, Wellington.

DEAR SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 22nd December, 1898.

I beg to thank you for your letter of the 19th instant, informing me of the explanation given by the Secretary of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company at Montreal of the detention of the overland train from New York to Vancouver on the 3rd May last, referred to in the issue of the *Otago Daily Times* of the 28th July.

Yours, &c.,

J. H. N. A. Burnes, Esq.,

W. GRAY, Secretary.

New Zealand Shipping Company (Limited), Wellington.

No. 253.

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

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 29th December, 1898.

I have the honour to refer to your letter of the 14th ultimo with reference to the transport of the "Aorangi's" homeward mails. * * * * *

I note your representations as to your being advised of the departure of the mails from Vancouver, and have given instructions to the Mail-agents to telegraph you, as desired, when the mails leave. * * * * *

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY, Secretary.

H. Stephenson Smith, Esq.,

Resident Agent for New Zealand, San Francisco.

No. 254.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the PREMIER.

Westminster Chambers, 13, Victoria Street, London, S.W.,

30th December, 1898.

SIR,—

I beg herewith to transmit copy of letter from the General Post Office in continuation of the correspondence, copy of which went with my letter of the 13th instant.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

W. P. REEVES.

Enclosure in No. 254.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, London, to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

General Post Office, London, 24th December, 1898.

The Postmaster-General has had before him your letter of the 7th December [see Enclosure 8 in No. 248], in which, referring to his Grace's recent decision to send once more by