

No. 284.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to the MANAGING DIRECTOR, Union Steam Ship Company, Dunedin.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 11th April, 1899.

WE have been asked whether it is not possible to arrange with you for a more prompt connection with the homeward Suez mail at Sydney or Melbourne. It is suggested, in connection with your Wellington-Sydney service, that if the departure of the steamers hence were changed from Saturday to Thursday this would meet what is desired, as the mails would be delivered in Sydney on Monday in ample time to connect with the mail leaving there the following day. I should be glad, therefore, if you would give this proposal consideration, and let me know whether you can see your way to make this or any other alteration which would secure what is wanted, and on what terms.

No. 285.

The MANAGING DIRECTOR, Union Steam Ship Company, Dunedin, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

Dunedin, 14th April, 1899.

THE present time-table running of our steamers is that which is most suitable and economical for the trade, and to alter it in order to make closer connection with Federal service either at Sydney or Melbourne would entail great inconvenience, besides considerable expense during winter months. Trade does not warrant weekly service to Melbourne and Sydney, and it is therefore reduced to ten-days service. Furthermore, the five steamers which maintain weekly service during summer could not be relied upon to do so in winter, when delays are caused through bad weather at sea, also wet days in port; and when large cargoes of produce have to be handled, especially with the present inadequate railway facilities to insure the connection. Your wish, therefore, would compel us to run weekly service all the year around, and also necessitate during winter keeping an additional steamer in reserve available at all times so as to insure non-interruption of service. I am not prepared to say at the moment what subsidy we would require, but it would be at least from twelve to fifteen thousand.

No. 286.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to the MANAGING DIRECTOR, Union Steam Ship Company, Dunedin.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 14th April, 1899.

SUEZ service connection: I fully recognise the difficulties, especially during the winter months, when the Bluff-Melbourne and Wellington-Sydney running will be reduced to once in ten days. A weekly connection, however, is not desired; and if you could see your way to have a fixed departure from Wellington to Sydney every fourth Thursday, on the second Thursday following the despatch of Frisco mail, this should prove a satisfactory arrangement. When the time comes around again for the Sunday arrival in London this would give about a thirty-seven days through service with a delivery ten days before arrival of succeeding Frisco mail. A four-weekly service from Bluff, on the second Tuesday after despatch of Frisco mail, should suit almost as well, assuming that your Saturday-night service hence to Lyttelton is to be continued. I take it that the Auckland-Sydney weekly service will not be disturbed; and were the Auckland sailing-day made Wednesday a fairly satisfactory connection would be secured. I should be glad if you would consider these suggestions, and let me have your views as early as convenient.

No. 287.

The MANAGING DIRECTOR, Union Steam Ship Company, Dunedin, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand (Limited), Dunedin,

SIR,—

26th April, 1899.

Your proposal that we should alter our dates of sailing from Wellington to Sydney so as to secure to you a connection with the Federal mail-service, leaving Wellington on Thursday each fourth week, and thus afford an alternate departure with the monthly San Francisco mail, has been under consideration.

As already advised you, the present time-table running of our steamers is that which is the most suitable and economical for our trades, and to meet your requirements would not only entail a recasting of our entire intercolonial service, but, as trade does not warrant running more than a ten-days service between Wellington and Sydney during the winter months, it would necessitate maintaining a weekly service all the year round. The latter would be needful in order to give a fixed day of departure—a ten-day service would fall upon the same day once in three weeks.

For this service we shall require a subsidy of £1,000 per month, and for this we will maintain a weekly service, and give you a fixed departure each fourth Wednesday (not Thursday).

This service would practically afford you the advantage of a weekly connection with the Federal mail-service, as the mails could leave Invercargill by train on Mondays, Dunedin and Christchurch on Tuesdays, and overtake steamer from Wellington on Wednesdays. Steamers from Auckland will probably continue to run as hitherto. If, however, our offer is entertained, the day of departure from the Bluff will necessarily be altered.

I have, &c.,

JAMES MILLS, Managing Director.

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