

No. 75.

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

SIR,— Resident Agency for New Zealand, San Francisco, 21st March, 1899.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 14th February last [see No. 52].

As I have already placed the department in possession of my views in respect of the change of departure-date from New Zealand, it will not be necessary to make any comment, further than to state that I have communicated with the International Steamship Company at New York, as well as the New York Post Office, soliciting their co-operation in securing a prompt connection with their steamers for the homeward mails. I have also requested the Superintendent of the United States Railway Mail-service at Chicago to wire me the date and hour of the departure of the next east-bound mail from his office. It will be necessary, in my opinion, to have this information furnished every month, so that I shall have some authentic information in case of delays west of Chicago which may prevent connection at New York without pressure being put on the steamship company to await arrival.

I have, &c.,

H. STEPHENSON SMITH, Resident Agent.

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

No. 76.

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

General Post Office, Wellington, 23rd March, 1899.

SIR,— *San Francisco Mail-service.*

I have the honour, by direction, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th December last [No. 18], and your unofficial memorandum of the 28th ultimo, both on the subject of a fast mail-service to and from San Francisco, and to inform you that your proposals will have the Right Hon. Mr. Seddon's careful consideration.

I am to say that, in view of the cessation of the contract for the Vancouver service, Government will probably submit proposals to Parliament which will cover the whole question of ocean mail-services.

I have, &c.,

The Managing Director,

W. GRAY, Secretary.

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

No. 77.

The DEPUTY POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Sydney, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

Postal and Electric Telegraph Department, General Post Office, Sydney,

SIR,— 25th March, 1899.

With reference to the recent alterations in the time-table between Sydney and San Francisco, under which the steamers leave Sydney two days later than formerly, I have the honour to point out that no arrangement was made with this department to change the hour of departure from Sydney from 4 p.m., but it would appear that the time fixed has been made noon instead of 4 p.m. If this time be adhered to, considerable difficulty will be experienced in transferring the mails which arrive from Queensland by train, due at the Redfern Railway-station, Sydney, at 11.40 a.m., as well as the intercolonial mails from the southern colonies, should the train happen to be a little late. In point of fact, this difficulty was experienced on the occasion of the departure of the "Mariposa," when it was impossible to get the mails down to the steamer in time, and she had to be detained until 12.20 p.m.

I therefore trust you will consider that the circumstances justify the change in the hour of departure of these packets from noon to, say, 1 p.m., with the understanding that on occasions when the trains may be running late the company will even wait as late as 2 p.m. for the mails.

I have, &c.,

S. H. LAMBTON, Deputy Postmaster-General.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

No. 78.

The SECRETARY, Chamber of Commerce, Wellington, to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

SIR,— Wellington Chamber of Commerce, Wellington, 25th March, 1899.

In view of the approaching cessation of the Vancouver mail-service, the council of this Chamber desires to respectfully urge upon the Government the desirableness of such an extension of the existing service *via* San Francisco as would provide a fortnightly mail each way.

The council desires, however, to recommend that, as the Vancouver mail was specially serviceable to the central and southern parts of the colony, the proposed additional service should use Wellington as the New Zealand port of call, the alternate mails continuing to call at Auckland as heretofore.

It is also desired to suggest that, as an inward and outward trade of some importance had grown up with Fiji by means of the Vancouver boats, the proposed additional steamers to and from San Francisco might call at Fiji instead of Samoa with the view of conserving such trade.