

It was unfortunate that the connection at Chicago should have been again missed on the 20th November; but the Postmaster-General is very pleased to learn that every effort has been made and is being made by your department to prevent similar mishaps in future.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY, Secretary.

The Superintendent, Office of Foreign Mails, Post Office Department, Washington.

No. 128.

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

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 19th January, 1901.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th ultimo. The earlier despatch of the "Mariposa" was quite in accordance with the wishes of the department.

I note the cause of delays in inaugurating the new service, but I have written on the matter elsewhere. [Not printed.]

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I have, &c.,

W. GRAY, Secretary.

H. Stephenson Smith, Esq., Resident Agent for New Zealand, San Francisco.

No. 129.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to the SUPERINTENDENT of FOREIGN MAILS, Washington.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 19th January, 1901.

In reference to the renewed arrangements for the despatch of British and colonial mails through the United States, whereby the J. D. Spreckels and Brothers Company, of San Francisco, are the sole contractors with your Government for the service from San Francisco to Auckland, I have the honour to request that you will be so good as to provide for the detention of the steamers at San Francisco to await the British mails on any occasion on which it may be necessary to do so in consequence of delayed overland transit or other causes preventing the mails reaching San Francisco in time. I trust that you will find no difficulty in complying with this request.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY, Secretary.

The Superintendent, Office of Foreign Mails, Post Office Department, Washington, D.C.

[Copy sent to the RESIDENT AGENT for NEW ZEALAND, San Francisco, on the 22nd February.]

No. 130.

Mr. A. P. DRYDEN, Mail-agent, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

General Post Office, Wellington, 29th January, 1901.

SIR,—

Receipt of and Responsibility for San Francisco Mails.

I have the honour to report that during my last stay in San Francisco the United States Post Office notified the Oceanic Steamship Company that the law required the company to receive all mails at the door of the post office, and to be responsible therefor until their safe delivery at respective destinations. The Mail-agents of this department have hitherto dealt directly with and been recognised by the American Post Office, but for the future the company is to be held directly responsible for all mails shipped from the port of San Francisco. This, I believe, is in accordance with the law, and has been observed for many years at such ports as New York and New Orleans. On being made acquainted with the ruling of the Post Office, the marine superintendent of the Oceanic Company—Captain Howard—requested me to continue to receive mails as hitherto, acting on behalf of the company. I pointed out to Captain Howard that I could only do this as a matter of accommodation to the company and subject to the approval of the department, that the Mail-agents would not undertake personal responsibility, nor would the Government which employed them, but that, subject to such limitation, I should be glad to recommend the department to authorise its Mail-agents to continue to receive and deliver all mails between San Francisco and Auckland.

The mails carried by the San Francisco line are now very large and diversified. On my last voyage, in addition to the mails for New Zealand, I received and disposed of about one hundred and sixty bags for the Philippine Islands, nearly one hundred for Honolulu, mails for German and American Samoa, for Fiji, and the various Australian States. The total number of bags shipped at San Francisco amounts to from nine hundred to twelve hundred, and their receipt and proper stowage require no little care and trouble. However, I think the department should, for the convenience of all concerned, notify the Oceanic Company in writing that Mail-agents will continue to receive and deliver all mails as a matter of accommodation, but that Government will not accept any responsibility for their safe keeping. This, in my opinion, is a very necessary step. . . . The company does not always provide sufficient secure space for all mails shipped, and the department should be careful to repudiate responsibility in the event of any robbery happening.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

A. P. DRYDEN, Mail-agent.