

Office of the sea-rates for the conveyance, by the San Francisco service, of British mails for New Zealand and Australia. A copy of my reply and of my cablegram of 14th instant, acquainting you with the substance of the Post Office letter, are also enclosed.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
W. P. REEVES.

Enclosure 1 in No. 139.

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

SIR,—

General Post Office, E.C., 13th February, 1901.

With reference to your letter of the 2nd October last [Enclosure 2 in No. 95] and subsequent correspondence respecting the mail-service between San Francisco and New Zealand, I am directed to inform you that the United States Post Office has announced its intention of looking to the Postmaster-General for payment of the sea-rates due for the conveyance by that service of British mails for New Zealand and Australia.

As you were informed in the letter from this department of the 5th October, the United States Post Office is, in the absence of any special arrangement on the subject between it and the New Zealand Post Office, entitled to such payment; and, if your Government has no objection to offer, the United States Post Office will be informed that its request will be complied with.

The Agent-General for New Zealand.

I am, &c.,
H. BUXTON FORMAN.

Enclosure 2 in No. 139.

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

SIR,—

13, Victoria Street, S.W., 14th February, 1901.

I am directed by the Agent-General to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 13th instant, relating to the proposed payment to the United States Post Office of the sea-rates for the conveyance by the San Francisco service of British mails for New Zealand and Australia.

The Agent-General is acquainting his Government by cable with the contents of your letter, and as soon as a reply is received he will communicate with you again.

The Secretary, General Post Office.

I am, &c.
WALTER KENNAWAY.

[For Enclosure 3 in No. 139 see No. 137.]

No. 140.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the PREMIER.

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

22nd February, 1901.

SIR,—

I beg to state that I was advised by cablegram from Messrs. Cameron, of New York, that the mails despatched from New Zealand on the 19th January last only left New York for London on the 16th instant.

As the s.s. "Umbria," the steamer by which the mails are coming, is not a fast vessel, the mails, in all probability, will not be delivered here until Monday next, the 25th instant, or more than nine days after the due date. [Mails were delivered on the 24th.]

I transmit copy of letter which I addressed to the London office of the American and Australian line asking for an explanation of the delay, and I also enclose copy of the reply which I received thereto, by which it will be seen that the delay is attributed to "a slight break-down" of the s.s. "Sierra" between Auckland and San Francisco.

I did not expect to have a more detailed reply to my inquiry, but whatever the cause it is certainly extremely unsatisfactory and most inconvenient that so great a delay has occurred, more especially at the commencement of the new service.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
W. P. REEVES.

Enclosure 1 in No. 140.

The SECRETARY to the AGENT-GENERAL to the MANAGER, American and Australian Line, London.

DEAR SIR,—

13, Victoria Street, S.W., 19th February, 1901.

I am directed by the Agent-General to inquire whether you can give him any explanation as to the cause of the delay in the arrival in London of the mails from New Zealand *via* San Francisco. The mails are stated to have left Auckland, New Zealand, by the s.s. "Sierra" on the 19th January (the time-table date), and to have arrived at San Francisco on the 11th instant—that is, seven days after the due date—so that it would appear that the delay arose between New Zealand and San Francisco.

The Agent-General will be much obliged if you could afford him any information with respect to the matter.

The Manager, American and Australian Line.

I am, &c.,
WALTER KENNAWAY.