

“Sonoma’s” will be at least a week late. The irregularities of the new service have done much to destroy the good name the Frisco route has had for years. Unless public confidence is at once restored support at both ends will no doubt be withdrawn from the line. There have as yet been no grave complaints from the colonies, but the business-people in London are up in arms. Twice the Agent-General has represented the serious inconvenience and money loss produced by the irregular and late delivery of the mails.

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No. 72.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to Messrs. HENDERSON AND MACFARLANE, Auckland.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 30th April, 1901.

AWAITING definite information as to time of departure of “Sonoma” from Auckland. Public very much concerned, and constant inquiries are being made.

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No. 73.

Messrs. HENDERSON AND MACFARLANE, Auckland, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

Oceanic Steamship Company (American and Australian Line),

SIR,—

Auckland, 1st May, 1901.

We have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your telegrams of 29th and 30th instant, both dealing with the delay of the s.s. “Sonoma” in leaving Sydney. In reply to your first, we immediately telegraphed you [not printed] giving at once our reasons for not at once advising you of her date of sailing, as, although the newspapers published information that she would be ten days late, our advice from Sydney was not couched in such definite terms. In reply to your second, we immediately cabled to Sydney that you were anxious to hear date of sailing, and on receipt of their reply, which reached us last night at 8 o’clock, we telegraphed you [not printed] that they expect repairs to be finished in time to despatch her from their port on the 8th May, and would therefore be despatched from here on the 12th of that month. We regret the unavoidable delay of the sailing of the steamer, and are much obliged for your advice *in re* the annoyance felt by London merchants on account of the irregular sailings and arrivals of the new steamers. We are passing a copy of your telegrams to our head office at San Francisco, which will speak for themselves of the feeling at this end. Your remarks on the regularity of the services as maintained by the “Alameda,” “Mariposa,” and “Moana” are very pleasing to us, and we have not the slightest doubt that the few regrettable incidents which have caused delay in delivery of mails lately are at an end. Although outside the present issue, it may not be out of place to remark that for the first few months of new steamers running it is not unusual for slight mishaps in the machinery to occur. In closing, we trust that the friendly attitude which your Government has always held towards the American and Australian line will be maintained.

We have, &c.,

HENDERSON AND MACFARLANE,

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

General Agents for New Zealand.

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No. 74.

Messrs. HENDERSON AND MACFARLANE, Auckland, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

Auckland, 3rd May, 1901.

SYDNEY cables the following: “Making strenuous efforts despatch ‘Sonoma’ eighth, but impossible guarantee; possibly detained tenth. Advise you definitely Monday.”

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No. 75.

Messrs. HENDERSON AND MACFARLANE, Auckland, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

Auckland, 6th May, 1901.

“SONOMA” leaves Sydney ninth. Despatch her hence Monday, thirteenth, two p.m.

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No. 76.

The Hon. the PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 9th May, 1901.

OWING to breakdown “Sonoma,” San Francisco mail leaves Auckland thirteenth, nine days late. All accumulations sent Brindisi, leaving Melbourne yesterday.