

be delivered on board, we would now confirm our verbal statement that any such delay at San Francisco would be granted simply through the courtesy of the United States Government, which, according to its contract with the J. D. Spreckels and Bros. Company, has a right to order vessels to sail at the appointed times. Such delays in departures as have already occurred at San Francisco are entirely on the responsibility of the Oceanic Steamship Company, which is not paid anything by the United States or by the New Zealand Government for loss of time and other expenses attending such delay.

You will therefore see that it is entirely out of our power, as general agents for the company in New Zealand, and, in fact, it is also out of the power of the company, to include any clause in the contract with your Government that would give the Hon. the Postmaster-General the power to delay the steamers at San Francisco after the scheduled hour of sailing. We will, however, refer the whole question to Messrs. J. D. Spreckels and Bros. and recommend them to get the permission of the Washington postal authorities to detain the steamers at San Francisco, when necessary, for a reasonable time after the scheduled hour of departure when it so happens that the steamer sailing on her time-table date would leave the English mails to come on to New Zealand by the next sailing, twenty-one days thereafter.

We understand that your Government will also take up this question with the Washington authorities, and make request for their agreeing to the New Zealand Government's paying demurrage as herein stated in the event of their consenting to the delay of the steamers at San Francisco.

In respect of the letter from the Secretary of the Wellington Chamber of Commerce to the Hon. the Postmaster-General, regarding representations made by the Conference of Chambers of Commerce, held in Christchurch in January, 1901, dealing with the question of freight rates charged by the Oceanic Steamship Company from San Francisco to the southern ports of this colony, the same being 12s. 6d. per ton more than to Auckland, we have the honour to inform you that this rate of 12s. 6d. per ton on general cargo has to be paid by us to the Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand (Limited), or whichever coastal company carries our transshipments south from Auckland. We may state here as a fact that at the present time English companies trading to New Zealand charge the local ruling rate from their steamers' New Zealand ports of call to such ports in New Zealand as the through cargo requires to be transhipped to. We trade on the same lines, and if a through rate was made to all New Zealand ports we should be giving merchants in the far south and in out-ports preferential treatment, which you will recognise, in the face of it, as unfair.

We have the honour to request your reply to this letter, confirming the verbal agreement of yesterday to the changes suggested by Messrs. the J. D. Spreckels and Bros. Company in the draft contract; and remain,

Yours, &c.,

HENDERSON AND MACFARLANE,
General Agents in New Zealand.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

No. 62.

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

(Telegram.)

Auckland, 21st April, 1902.

REVERTING to conversation about "Ventura" coming alongside, trust this will be granted. Doctor can inspect passengers, and ship be kept 4 ft. off wharf.

No. 63.

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

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 21st April, 1902.

I HAVE just had a conversation with Dr. Mason. He informs me that he is leaving for Auckland to-morrow morning. I told him that I would ask you to see him on Wednesday. Shall be glad if you will do so. He will discuss matter of allowing Frisco steamers to come to wharf, but I gather from him that he is not favourably disposed.

No. 64.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to Mr. SPROUL, Auckland.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 22nd April, 1902.

DRAFT contract: our recent interview, and your letter 16th instant:—I fear the draft will not be out of the hands of Solicitor-General in time for outgoing mail, and it would perhaps facilitate matters were I now in a formal way to indicate how far Mr. Spreckels's amendments are likely to be agreed to. The alterations in clauses 1, 2, 3, and 4 accepted. The proposed amendment in clause 5 is still under consideration, and I am awaiting information from Marine Department as to its powers for surveying and examining foreign-registered vessels. I do not think Mr. Spreckels's suggested amendment is sufficient for our purposes. The amendments in clause 6 have been agreed to. With respect to clause 8, the Department is at a serious disadvantage not having copy of contract between Washington Post Office and Messrs. Spreckels. Postmaster-General requires an assurance that the steamers will be detained at San Francisco to await arrival of British mails when late, and, as discussed with the Postmaster-General, first twelve hours' detention should be free, and after that five pounds (£5) an hour. It is the intention to write Washington Post Office