

No. 96.

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

SIR,—

Resident Agency for New Zealand, San Francisco, 17th June, 1901.

The mails brought by the "Sonoma" did not leave New York until the Thursday following arrival here, and the "Fürst Bismarck," which conveyed them, did not arrive in England until the morning of the 13th instant, or thirteen days late. The "Ventura" got here on Tuesday morning, and only by prompt work of the railway mail-service were we enabled to catch the 10 o'clock express, which gives us a "fighting chance" to catch the "Campania" on Saturday. The Cunard people have promised me to do everything possible, but the connection is not yet assured.

I took the opportunity of my recent visit to New York to interview all the managers of the steamship lines out of New York, on the subject of possible calls upon them in cases of close connections. They all expressed their desire to help us whenever possible. The Cunard Company (owning the Saturday steamers) especially signified its intention of doing all in its power to facilitate our connection with its steamers at New York, Mr. Vernon Brown promising me that whenever it was possible they would wait for our mails. In fact, my visit has brought me in much closer touch with the steamship companies; and in future I shall feel less hesitation in calling upon their good services when is required.

I have just received a telegram from the Cunard Company, giving the unpleasant news that the "Campania" waited up to the last moment but was obliged to leave without the mails, the train being one hour and a half late. After all our trouble and rush this is very disappointing, and will probably cause a three or four days' delay at New York and a corresponding late delivery in England.

I hear that part of the delay in the overland transit was caused by a breakdown of the engine on the Burlington route between Omaha and Chicago. I have, however, asked the Railway service to furnish me with a report of the cause or causes of the delay.

The mails *ex* "Umbria," bound for the colonies, will, I expect, arrive on Wednesday night, but, as Messrs. Spreckels have now decided not to leave after dark, it will be 10 a.m. on Thursday, at earliest, before they leave here.

19th: I am just advised that the "Ventura's" mail, English portion, left New York yesterday by the "Lahn" (a slow steamer of the North German Lloyds), and that the Irish portion left this morning by the "Oceanic." I fear both will be badly late.

I have, &c.,

H. STEPHENSON SMITH, Resident Agent.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

No. 97.

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

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 3rd July, 1901.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th April last, with reference to the recent delays in the service between here and San Francisco.

It is hoped that Messrs. Spreckels Bros. may be correct in suggesting that we have experienced almost the last of the delays on the Pacific. Of this, however, I am doubtful. The irregular running has been productive, as already stated, of the greatest public inconvenience, both here and in London, and has discredited the route to such a degree as will take it years to recover from. In the absence of any contract the Department is helpless in the matter, which makes the position, from a postal point of view, the more aggravating.

I have also received your letter of the 3rd May, on the subject of the mode of detaining the steamers when the overland mail is late in reaching San Francisco.

I have, &c.,

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

W. GRAY, Secretary.

No. 98.

The Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, London.

SIR,—

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

I have the honour to inform you that the Mail-agent by the last voyage of the "Sonoma" reports the short receipt at San Francisco of a bag of mail, London to Fiji, of 8th June, which was noted on the through waybill to San Francisco as having failed to reach Chicago. The Washington office has been requested to make inquiries into the failure, and to send a copy of the explanation to you.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY, for the Postmaster-General.

The Secretary, General Post Office, London.