

much of this reduced time will affect the Pacific section. I am going to look into the matter in a few days, and if I can get anything authentic will advise you, as it may be important if any connection with Vancouver terminal is determined upon later on . . .

I have, &c.,

H. STEPHENSON SMITH, Resident Agent.

No. 124.

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

SIR,— Resident Agency for New Zealand, San Francisco, 27th February, 1902.

Your letter of the 30th January [not printed] reached me per "Sonoma," which vessel did not arrive until midday on Tuesday, some derangement of machinery, I believe, being the cause. Of course, the mails had to wait in New York from Sunday to Wednesday, when the English portion went forward on the "St. Louis," and the Irish per "Teutonic." The last Home-ward mails, which left New York per "Umbria," arrived at Liverpool on the 10th February, which was late.

The "Sonoma" is scheduled to leave to-night at 7 p.m.; but, as the weather is very bad, I think it quite possible that a delay will be made until to-morrow (Friday) morning. Sixteen feet have been added to the smoke-stacks this time, so I hope better time will be made on the voyage down.

I have, &c.,

H. STEPHENSON SMITH, Resident Agent.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

No. 125.

Messrs. HENDERSON and MACFARLANE, Auckland, to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington.

Oceanic Steamship Company (American and Australian Line),

Auckland, 3rd March, 1902.

SIR,—

In connection with the late arrival of the R.M.S. "Sierra" from San Francisco at this port on the 28th ultimo (due date, 25th ultimo), we have the honour to inform you that, according to our head-office advices, the British mails were shipped from Liverpool by the Cunard liner "Saxonia" on the 25th January. That steamer was due in New York on Sunday, the 2nd February, but did not arrive till Tuesday, the 4th. As you are aware, the fast steamers of the Cunard line (including the "Campania," "Lucania," "Umbria," and "Etruria") leave Liverpool on Saturdays, and arrive New York the following Saturday mornings, in time for the British mails to be delivered on board the Oceanic steamer at San Francisco on the following Thursday morning. You will thus see that the late arrival of the "Sierra" at this port was on account of the English mails arriving three days late in San Francisco, and it may interest you to learn that the American liner "St. Louis" left Southampton on the same day that the "Saxonia" left Liverpool, and arrived in New York on Sunday, the 2nd ultimo—two days ahead of the "Saxonia." If the English mails, therefore, had been placed on board this steamer they would have reached San Francisco on the Thursday evening, and our steamer would only have suffered detention to the extent of about eight hours, while the mails, no doubt, would have reached here exactly on scheduled date.

Considering the above facts, we think that we are reasonably entitled to what influence your Government can bring to bear on the English postal authorities to procure that the mails be forwarded by the vessel that promises the earliest delivery, for, as you are no doubt aware, by the terms of the Oceanic Steamship Company's contract with the United States Government our steamers are at liberty to depart on regular schedule-time, without regard to the arrival of the English mails at San Francisco. The detention of the "Sierra" for three days illustrates the efforts which the Oceanic Company is making to treat this colony in a magnanimous spirit, and we may say that the results of such a detention upset all our arrangements in regard to coaling at the various ports, cause anxiety in Honolulu (where the cause for the delay is unknown), injure our local traffic with Honolulu, and play into the hands of the other lines making Honolulu a port of call from San Francisco *en route* to Japan and China.

In detailing the effect of holding our steamers back for the English mails we have not mentioned the expense that our company is put to. This includes the extra maintenance of passengers on board, and extra coal burned on the trip endeavouring to make up some of the lost time; while three days' extra wages to the large crew required on our steamers total up to no inconsiderable amount. We will therefore be glad to hear if your Government will allow us some compensation to cover our loss. In the event of your favourable consideration of this claim, we leave it entirely in your hands to determine the amount.

We might only add that throughout the Australasian Colonies the facts governing the late arrivals of our steamers are not generally known, and our line gets a name for uncertainty which affects the passenger-travel to some considerable extent.

With every confidence that you will consider all the statements made in this letter in a liberal manner,

We have, &c.,

HENDERSON AND MACFARLANE.

P.S.—"Sonoma," from San Francisco: We are in receipt of a cablegram stating that this steamer left on the 28th ultimo at 2 a.m. This makes her departure sixteen hours after schedule-time, and the reason for it doubtless is similar to that which detained the "Sierra."

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Wellington.

H. AND M.