

No. 131.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the PREMIER.

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

SIR,—

27th March, 1902.

Referring to your cablegram of the 11th instant, instructing me to urge the Imperial Post Office to transmit the outgoing San Francisco mails by the fastest available vessels, I beg to enclose copy of letter which I addressed to the Secretary to the General Post Office, and to which I have received reply stating that the matter will receive the attention of the Postmaster-General.

I may say here that the delivery of the mails from New Zealand is, in point of time, still very unsatisfactory. The mail due in London last Saturday, 22nd instant, is not yet delivered, and the non-delivery of the letters coming by it is causing considerable inconvenience in mercantile circles, as to-morrow, Good Friday, being a *dies non*, it will be hardly possible to send replies by the outgoing mail *via* San Francisco, closing as it does at midday on Saturday.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

W. P. REEVES.

Enclosure in No. 131.

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

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

SIR,—

11th March, 1902.

I am directed by the Agent-General to direct your attention to the fact that the New Zealand mails which closed in London on the 25th January last were, in consequence of their being forwarded to New York by the s.s. "Saxonia," one of the slowest boats of the Cunard line, three days late in reaching New York, thus enforcing the detention of the s.s. "Sierra" at San Francisco, involving heavy losses to the owners of that steamer and causing late delivery of the mails in New Zealand; and, in reference thereto, to further state that the s.s. "St. Louis," which left Southampton also on the 25th January, arrived at New York two days earlier than the s.s. "Saxonia."

Under these circumstances, the Agent-General has been instructed by his Government to urgently represent to the Postmaster-General that it would be greatly to the advantage of both this country and the colony that when the swiftest contract mail-steamers are withdrawn from, or otherwise not available for, the service between this country and New York the New Zealand mails should be forwarded by the fastest vessel otherwise available for the service in question.

The Secretary, General Post Office.

I am, &c.,

WALTER KENNAWAY.

No. 132.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the PREMIER.

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

SIR,—

4th April, 1902.

Referring to my letter of the 27th March last, I beg herewith to transmit copy of letter received this day from the Imperial Post Office with reference to the transmission to New York of the outgoing San Francisco mails.

You will observe that the Postmaster-General hopes, in case the Cunard Company do not employ their fastest steamers for the transmission of the New Zealand mails, to forward them by a fast steamer of some other line.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

W. P. REEVES.

Enclosure in No. 132.

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

SIR,—

General Post Office, London, 3rd April, 1902.

Referring to your letter of the 11th of last month, I am directed to inform you that the Postmaster-General duly represented to the Cunard Steamship Company the delay and inconvenience which had resulted in the case of mails for New Zealand from the use of the "Saxonia" as the mail-packet to New York on the 25th January.

The directors of the company have expressed their regret that, in consequence of their not having a faster vessel at their disposal on that occasion, it became necessary to detain the packet "Sierra" at San Francisco for some days, and they hope that the difficulty will not again arise. On the next four occasions the mails for New Zealand sent *via* the United States should be conveyed by the "Umbria," "Campania," "Etruria," and "Lucania."

The Postmaster-General suggested to the company that their sailings should be arranged in such a manner that if on occasions it is necessary to employ for their contract service any but their fastest steamers this may be done on other dates than those fixed for the despatch of mails for New Zealand; and, if this cannot be arranged, the Postmaster-General hopes to be able on any future occasion of the kind to forward the mails for New Zealand by a fast steamer of some other line.

The Agent-General for New Zealand.

I am, &c.,

H. BUXTON FORMAN.