

No. 133.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to the SUPERINTENDENT of FOREIGN MAILS, Washington.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 24th April, 1902.

Referring to my letter of the 19th January, 1901 [No. 129, F.-6, 1901], on the subject of the detention of the mail-steamers at San Francisco to await the arrival of British closed mails for the colonies whenever that course may become necessary in order to secure due despatch, and your reply of the 15th February following [No. 138 *ibidem*], to the effect that, while your Department could not compel the Oceanic Steamship Company to hold its steamers at San Francisco for the purpose mentioned, you were of opinion that there would be no doubt that the company would comply with your Department's request to that effect, and that you would have no hesitation in making such request, I have the honour to inform you that the draft contract between the Postmaster-General of New Zealand and the Oceanic Steamship Company is now being revised, and this all-important matter to this colony necessarily has come up for discussion. The company consider that they have no power to hold or to keep the steamers at San Francisco without specific authority from your office; but at the same time they express themselves as quite agreeable to detain the vessels whenever you are willing to consent to their doing so. For such detention this Department, subject to the approval of the Postmaster-General of the United States, is prepared to pay the Oceanic Steamship Company demurrage at the rate of £5 an hour after the first twelve hours, and the company have been advised to this effect.

I should be much obliged if you would kindly consider the proposal now made, and inform me whether there would be any objection to the Department's paying demurrage, as suggested.

I am to thank you for the courteous attention you have hitherto given to the matter of assuring connection with the mail-steamers at San Francisco of the west-bound British mails whenever late, and to express the hope that the present arrangement, which has worked so successfully, will, in any case, be continued.

I have, &c.,

The Superintendent,

W. GRAY, Secretary.

Office of Foreign Mails, Post Office Department, Washington, D.C.

No. 134.

The Hon. the ACTING-PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 13th May, 1902.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th March last, referring to my cablegram of the 11th idem on the above-mentioned subject, and forwarding copy of a letter from your office to the Secretary, General Post Office, London, representing the inconvenience caused by the delay to the New Zealand mails owing to the use of a slow boat for their despatch to New York.

It is observed that the "St. Louis" was used for the mails forwarded on the 15th February and 8th March, and no doubt your representations will have the effect of deciding the London office to continue the use of the fastest steamers available, irrespective of ownership.

The continuance of the late arrival in London of the mails *via* San Francisco is much regretted, but the Postmaster-General is hopeful that it may be possible to arrange for a change in the sailing-day from Auckland from Saturday to Friday, in which case connection with the fast steamer from New York on the Saturday would be insured, and the delays now occurring would disappear.

I have, &c.,

J. G. WARD, Acting-Premier.

The Hon. W. P. Reeves, Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

No. 135.

The Hon. the ACTING-PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 17th May, 1902.

HOMEWARD Frisco delays again strongly represented Spreckels. [No. 65.] Urged despatch Auckland Friday assure connection New York fast boat Saturday.

No. 136.

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

Oceanic Steamship Company (American and Australian Line),
Auckland, 29th May, 1902.

SIR,—

We have the honour to refer you to our letter of 3rd March, in which we requested compensation for the detention of the "Sierra," which waited at San Francisco from her due time-table date to 9th February for the arrival of the English mail which was landed late in New York by the Cunard Company's "Saxonia." It appears that an official of the J. D. Spreckels and Bros. Company requested us to make a claim without the consent of the president, Mr. John D. Spreckels,