

Enclosure in No. 45.

The J. D. SPRECKELS AND BROS. COMPANY, San Francisco, to Messrs. HENDERSON AND MACFARLANE, Auckland.

DEAR SIR,—

329, Market Street, San Francisco, 18th November, 1903.

We have your favour of the 13th ultimo, enclosing copies of correspondence which you have had with the Secretary of the General Post Office in reference to failure of the mails *ex* "Sonoma" to catch the Monday morning train from here, and also in regard to the necessity of enlargement of the room for stowing the mails on that steamer. In regard to the first-mentioned matter, we may say that, since the fast train has left here at 10 a.m., we have endeavoured to have the steamers arrive here in time to connect with it, but this is not always possible, on account of bad weather and other causes over which we have no control.

We understand that a change is about to be made in the railroad time-table, whereby the time of departure of the fast train from here will be made 12 noon, though we cannot say anything definite as to this at present. If this change is made it will give us a better chance of making connection. The "Sonoma" on the present trip, for instance, reached here just too late for the mails to go forward on the 10 a.m. train, but would have made connection had the train left two hours later.

We are having the capacity for stowage of mails on the "Sonoma" increased, and we trust that there will not be any further cause for complaint on that score.

Yours, &c.,

J. D. SPRECKELS AND BROS. COMPANY, General Agents.

Messrs. Henderson and Macfarlane, Auckland.

No. 46.

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

GENTLEMEN,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 18th December, 1903.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th instant, covering copy of one dated the 18th ultimo, from the J. D. Spreckels and Bros. Company, San Francisco, about this Department's representations to you with regard to the failure of the Homeward mails per R.M.S. "Sonoma," which reached San Francisco on Monday, the 7th September last, to arrive in time for despatch that day by the 10 a.m. express train to New York, and to the want of storage-space on the "Sonoma" on the lower deck under the mail-room.

I note that, owing to bad weather and other causes over which the company had no control, it had not always been practicable for the steamers to reach San Francisco in time for the mails to be sent by the Monday morning's train for the east, although efforts had been made to do so. The possible change in the railway time-table by postponing the departure of the overland express from San Francisco for two hours will, it is hoped, be accomplished.

It has also been noted that the capacity for the storage of mails on the "Sonoma" was being increased.

The Department accepts the assurance that endeavours are made to land the mails in San Francisco in time to connect with the Monday morning's express, and is pleased to learn that increased mail-storage accommodation is being provided on the "Sonoma." I shall be glad to hear that extra accommodation will also be provided on the "Sierra" and "Ventura."

I have, &c.,

Messrs. Henderson and Macfarlane, Auckland.

W. GRAY, Secretary.

No. 47.

The Hon. the PRIME MINISTER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Prime Minister's Office, Wellington, 29th December, 1903.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23rd October last, covering one from the Imperial Post Office, stating that the Cunard Steamship Company's vessel "Lucania" was, by arrangement, detained at New York on the 3rd October for two hours, so that she might carry the Homeward mail from New Zealand.

The action of the Cunard Steamship Company's representative is much appreciated, and I shall be glad if you will send a suitable letter to the office of the company, conveying this Government's acknowledgments.

I have, &c.,

J. G. WARD, for Prime Minister.

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

No. 48.

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

SIR,—

Resident Agency for New Zealand, San Francisco, 13th February, 1904.

I have the honour to report that, upon the application of the contractors, and acting upon information from the traffic manager of the Southern Pacific Railroad Company, to the effect that the through mails for the colonies were held up on the Sierra Nevada mountains by a