

snow-slide, I issued notice to the Oceanic Steamship Company to hold the departure of the steamer "Ventura," in order to secure a connection for the mails, as per copy of letter enclosed; which I trust will be in accordance with the requirements of the contract as provided for therein. Messrs. Spreckels claim that they are entitled to demurrage from the expiration of twelve hours from 2 p.m. on Thursday, the original date advertised for sailing. I do not know how the Department may regard this, but I am of the opinion that they may be right in their contention.

I have, &c.,

H. STEPHENSON SMITH, Resident Agent.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

No. 49.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to the J. D. SPRECKELS AND BROS. COMPANY, San Francisco.

GENTLEMEN,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 17th February, 1904.

The Mail-agent has brought under notice the expeditious manner in which the mails by the R.M.S. "Sonoma" were landed on arrival at San Francisco on the 11th ultimo, which made it possible for the postal matter for the Eastern American States, United Kingdom, &c., to connect with the train which was shortly to leave for New York.

Your company's marine superintendent appears to have made excellent arrangements for the landing of the mails, and I have to express the thanks of this Department for the services rendered by that officer on the occasion in question.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY, Secretary.

Messrs. the J. D. Spreckels and Bros. Company
(Oceanic Steamship Company), San Francisco.

[Letter in similar terms of same date to POSTMASTER, San Francisco.]

No. 50.

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

SIR,—

Resident Agency for New Zealand, San Francisco, 2nd March, 1904.

I have the honour to report that the mails received by the s.s. "Sierra" failed to connect at New York on Saturday last, notwithstanding that the Cunard Steamship Company waited three hours to enable the connection to be made.

I enclose for your information two communications that have lately been received from the General Manager of the Cunard Steamship Company at New York. If it were possible to carry out Mr. Brown's suggestion in respect of departure from Auckland at an earlier hour, it would in all probability enable us to make more winter connections at New York. The Oceanic Company do not appear to be able to make the connection here by the Monday morning train except under exceptionally fortunate circumstances, and the arrivals are entirely too unreliable to base any calculations upon. The mails this time will be delayed in New York until Wednesday, as there is no Tuesday boat this month.

I have, &c.,

H. STEPHENSON SMITH, Resident Agent.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

Enclosure 1 in No. 50.

The AGENTS, Cunard Steamship Company, New York, to the RESIDENT AGENT FOR NEW ZEALAND, San Francisco.

The Cunard Steamship Company (Limited), 29, Broadway, New York,
8th February, 1904.

DEAR SIR,—

Your telegram received—viz., "Our mails due (New York) 10 a.m. Saturday. Can you assist connection?"

In reply, we would say that our ship was appointed to sail at 9 a.m., it being high water at the bar at 11.20. We had notified Post Office on Friday that if necessary we would detain the "Etruria" until noon, which was the latest we could leave the dock to save the tide in crossing the bar, missing which we would have to wait until Sunday morning.

We were later advised that mail would not be due at the Grand Central Station until 1 p.m., with a possibility of a still further delay, and we therefore reluctantly notified the Post Office that we could not wait.

In connection with this subject, I would call attention to my letter of the 24th November [not printed], urging upon you the importance of arranging, if possible, an earlier departure of the mails from New Zealand. In the height of the passenger season, with anywhere from four hundred to a thousand passengers on board, it will be impracticable to materially delay our sailings; and, as the American line sail all the year round at 9.30 a.m., unless the suggested change is made in the departures from New Zealand the connections at New York will be more frequently missed in future.