

you that the delay was caused by the dry-docking of the steamer for the purpose of undergoing Lloyd's periodical survey, when it was found that the ordinary time in port was not sufficient to meet requirements. Work was carried on both night and day, and everything done to give the steamer the quickest possible despatch.

We have, &c.,

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington. HENDERSON AND MACFARLANE,
General Agents for New Zealand.

No. 13.

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

GENTLEMEN,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 16th September, 1905.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th instant, on the subject of the late departure from San Francisco of the R.M.S. "Sonoma" on the voyage due to commence on the 8th June last, and stating the reason for the detention of the vessel.

I have, &c.,

Messrs. Henderson and Macfarlane,

W. GRAY, Secretary.

General Agents, Oceanic Steamship Company, Auckland,

[P.O. 05/1412.]

No. 14.

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

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 26th September, 1905.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 30th ultimo, on the subject of the late arrival of the mail-steamers from New Zealand at San Francisco.

I note that the contractors were successful in making a connection with the "Campania" for the "Ventura's" homeward mails, and that you consider the performance of the mail-steamers is such that an unfailing connection with the Saturday Atlantic steamer cannot be relied upon.

It would not be possible to put forward the departure from Auckland by four or five hours, as this would necessitate an earlier sailing from Sydney to allow sufficient time for the discharge and shipping of cargo at Auckland. Moreover, it would not be always possible to insure the arrival of the coastal steamer with mails from the south in time to admit of a much earlier departure than heretofore. If the steamers were pushed whenever it was found that arrival in time was doubtful, I am of opinion it would be possible to make due connection at San Francisco.

A question was recently asked in the House of Representatives on the subject, copy of which, with the reply, I enclose for your information.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY, Secretary.

H. Stephenson Smith, Esq., Resident Agent for New Zealand, San Francisco.

[Agr. 05/47.]

Enclosure in No. 14.

ORDER PAPER, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, 5TH JULY, 1905.

66. Mr. DUTHIE asked the Postmaster-General, Whether, in view of the frequent delay in the arrival at London of the homeward mails *via* San Francisco, and the attendant inconvenience to business, it would not be better to despatch the mails a day earlier from the colony?

The Hon. Sir J. G. WARD (Postmaster-General), replied, The departure from Auckland has already been put forward a day—Saturday to Friday—a change which the contractors were very reluctant to adopt, as it reduced the lay-days in Sydney to ten days, barely sufficient, it was alleged, to discharge and ship cargo, overhaul, clean, coal, and provision the steamers. Moreover, a Thursday departure from Auckland would mean a Sunday sailing from Sydney and a Sunday arrival in San Francisco. I do not think it would be advisable to make a further change. There is now every reason to believe that the delivery of the mails in London will be more regular than it has been of late. The delays in the arrival of the mails, it should be stated, have not been altogether due to the late arrivals of the steamers at San Francisco from Auckland.

No. 15.

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

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 29th September, 1905.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1st instant, reporting that seventy-six bags of mail have been delayed in transit across the United States, and that arrangements had been made to postpone the departure of the R.M.S. "Ventura" until their arrival.

I await your further report in the matter.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY, Secretary.

H. Stephenson Smith, Esq., Resident Agent for New Zealand, San Francisco.

[Inc. 05/39.]