

In reply, I beg to inform you that, as the delay appears to have been due to causes beyond the control of your company, the Acting Postmaster-General has decided that the penalty provided in the contract for late arrival in Sydney be not imposed.

I have, &c.,

D. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

The General Manager, Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand (Limited), Dunedin.

[Suez Conn. 11/80.]

No. 233.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to the GENERAL MANAGER, Union Steam Ship Company, Wellington.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 2nd August, 1911.

I have the honour to inform you that the question has been again raised whether Government is prepared to take steps to facilitate the despatch to New Zealand of English mails arriving at Sydney by the Suez route. I should be obliged if you would look into the matter, and inform me at your early convenience whether it would be possible for your company to make any alteration in the existing time-table.

I have, &c.,

D. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

The General Manager, Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand (Limited), Wellington.

[Suez Conn. 11/84.]

No. 234.

The GENERAL MANAGER, Union Steam Ship Company, Dunedin, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand (Limited),

Dunedin, 3rd August, 1911.

SIR,—

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your favour of the 2nd instant, and, in reply, have to state that we are giving the question of a better connection with the arrival of the Suez mail in Sydney our close consideration at the present time, and will address you again on the subject.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

C. HOLDSWORTH, General Manager.

[Suez Conn. 11/87.]

No. 235.

[House of Representatives, 9th August, 1911.]

Mr. HERDMAN to ask the Acting Postmaster-General, Whether the Government is prepared to take steps to facilitate the despatch to New Zealand of English mails arriving at Sydney by the Suez route? [NOTE.—The mails are sometimes detained in Sydney for two days awaiting a steamer to carry them to New Zealand.]

The Right Hon. Sir J. G. WARD.—The Union Steam Ship Company has again been approached with a view to an alteration of the time-table of their steamers, which will ensure a closer connection with the inward Suez mails. In view, however, of the fact that the newly established Vancouver mail-service will, together with the San Francisco service, bring a regular fortnightly English mail in a shorter time than mails can, under the most favourable conditions, be received *via* Suez, Government is not prepared to consider any proposals in connection with the improvement of the Sydney—New Zealand service unless this can be obtained at a minimum cost.

[Suez Conn. 11/85.]

No. 236.

The Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL to MESSRS. GILBERT ANDERSON AND CO., London.

GENTLEMEN,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 12th September, 1911.

In reference to your letter of the 26th June last, and to my acknowledgment of the 29th idem [not printed], on the subject of the irregular arrival in London of mails from New Zealand, I have the honour to inform you that in the particular instance you put forward the delay was caused by the steamer between Wellington and Sydney missing connection with the express train for Melbourne. The mails were forwarded from Melbourne on the 25th May by a German liner, and reached London three days late.

It does not appear, however, that the mails are consistently late in arriving in London. Since the despatch from Christchurch on the 23rd February last the mails have arrived thrice on due date, five times before the time-table date, and six times late. Once out of the six times the lateness has been caused by the vessel despatched from New Zealand with the mail *via* Suez missing the connection at Sydney; and I do not think, from the assurances I have had from the contracting steamship companies, that these delays need be apprehended in the future.

I very fully appreciate the seriousness of these late arrivals, and you may depend that any proposal to prevent them will have my best attention. But over so very long a sea distance it seems to be out of the question to expect absolute regularity; and the best remedy to suggest seems to be the posting of documents as long before shipments are made as circumstances permit of.

I have, &c.,

J. G. WARD.

Messrs. Gilbert Anderson and Co., Terminus Chambers, 6 Holborn Viaduct, London E.C.

[P.O. 11/3475(1).]