

No. 50.

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

Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand (Limited),
Dunedin, 7th June, 1913.

SIR,—

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your favour of the 24th ultimo, covering copy of letter from Mr. E. Newman, M.P., requesting that Wellington should be the port of call for vessels engaged in the Vancouver mail-service instead of Auckland.

It seems to us to be beyond question that while there is only one port of call it must be Auckland, as being better situated geographically, and also being the principal seat of the butter industry. It is likely that the trade in the export of butter to the Pacific coast of Canada will be more valuable to New Zealand than the meat trade.

We do not think that the proposal to call at both Wellington and Auckland can be considered. It would be an expensive detour, would lengthen the voyage from Australia to Canada, and make the route much less attractive to through Australian passengers.

We cannot find that frozen meat is being, as a general thing, shipped to San Francisco and thence to Vancouver, and on looking up our records we can only trace one shipment which was sent, as a matter of urgency, owing to the destruction by fire of the large meat-stores at Calgary.

It appears to us that the most economical way of dealing with frozen meat from Wellington to Vancouver would be to send it in cold-storage cars by rail to Auckland, and there transfer it to the mail-steamer.

Might we take this opportunity of pointing out to you that the Wellington Harbour authorities do not seem disposed to offer much encouragement to mail-steamers to call at their port? Under contracts with your Department for both Vancouver and San Francisco services it is provided that these steamers shall be free of certain dues at the New Zealand port of call. Hitherto this exemption has been held to cover the charges inwards and outwards on continuation of the voyage to Sydney. Advantage, however, has been taken of a technical interpretation of a clause in the agreement to enforce the dues on these vessels entering and leaving New Zealand ports on their way to and from Sydney.

In connection with this claims have been made upon us by the Wellington Harbour Board for £1,053 2s. 9d., and by the Auckland Harbour Board for £429 16s. 8d.

If we are obliged to pay these amounts we propose to ask the Government to refund them to us as being within the spirit, if not the letter, of our contracts.

I have, &c.,

D. A. AIKEN,

Assistant General Manager.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

[Vanc. 13/43.]

No. 51.

The Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington, to the Hon. the PRIME MINISTER, Wellington.

(Memorandum.)

Postmaster-General's Office, Wellington, 25th June, 1913.

IN reference to the Prime Minister's memorandum of the 15th ultimo, covering a letter dated the 9th idem from Mr. Edward Newman, M.P., in which it is suggested that Wellington be a port of call for the Vancouver mail-contract steamers, I beg to state that under the contract the service is to be performed from and to Auckland. The contract does not expire until November of 1916. The contractors are not prepared to call at both Wellington and Auckland, as the detour would be expensive, the voyage from Australia to Canada would be lengthened, and the route would be made much less attractive to through Australian passengers. It seems to the contractors that while there is only one port of call it must be Auckland, as that port is better situated geographically, and is also the principal seat of the butter industry. The contractors cannot find that frozen meat is, as a general thing, shipped to San Francisco, thence to Vancouver; and on referring to their records they can trace only one such shipment, which was made as a matter of urgency owing to the destruction by fire of the large meat-stores at Calgary.

In the circumstances I regret that it is not practicable to make Wellington a port of call.

R. HEATON RHODES,

Postmaster-General.

The Hon. the Prime Minister, Wellington.

[Vanc. Misc. 13/99]

No. 52.

The CANADIAN TRADE COMMISSIONER, Auckland, to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington.

Department of Trade and Commerce, Canada, Trade Commissioner Service,

SIR,—

Auckland, New Zealand, 10th July, 1913.

With regard to the sailing from this port of the Vancouver steamers, there is a matter to which I desire to call your attention.

The sailing-date from Auckland is Friday, at 5 p.m. By arrangement with the Postal authorities the mail closes at 3.30 p.m., but the boats never leave at 5 o'clock. Very often they leave late on Friday night, and sometimes early on Saturday morning, and the "Makura," the last sailing north, left here at 12 o'clock on Saturday.