

No. 123.

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

Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand (Limited),
Dunedin, 9th February, 1914.

SIR,—

In reply to your letter of the 2nd February, regarding the despatch of the "Manuka" from Wellington on the 23rd ultimo, the steamer's hull was very foul consequent on the idle time during the recent labour troubles, and a large cargo had to be handled at Lyttelton and Wellington. The time at both those ports was curtailed owing to her late arrival on each occasion, which arose from the poor steaming results given by inferior coal, also the result of the strike. On the last portion of the voyage between Wellington and Sydney she experienced a strong breeze and rough beam sea, but in spite of this she anchored in Watson's Bay at 5.45 p.m. on the 27th ultimo, which left two hours for the mails to be transferred to the mail-train from Sydney. Under the circumstances it is hoped that the Department will recognize that the delays arose from reasons beyond our control, and not from any disregard to the company's obligations.

I have, &c.,

C. HUGHES, Secretary.

The Assistant Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

No. 124.

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

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 12th February, 1914.

In reference to your letter of the 12th ultimo, regarding the transfer of mails from the s.s. "Maunganui" at Watson's Bay on the 2nd December last, I have the honour to inform you that the Sydney Post Office reports as under:—

"From the first three of four slings of mails lowered on board the Union Steam Ship Company's tender 'Potoki' sixty-six bags were placed on the Government launch 'Premier,' which then left the 'Maunganui' for the wharf. These bags were checked on the way, and it was found that sixty-four bags were for the Melbourne express train, one for Brisbane, and one for Sydney. The remainder of the mail-bags, including Sydney bags, were placed on the 'Potoki' and conveyed to the Manly cargo wharf, those bags for Sydney being mixed with the forward bags. It was therefore necessary to handle all the bags before they could be placed on the carts for conveyance to the railway-station, the Sydney bags being placed on one side until all the forward bags had been despatched. A few hampers were taken to the Union Steam Ship Company's wharf by the s.s. 'Maunganui' and obtained later."

The failure to separate the mails on the "Maunganui" appears to have caused the delay, resulting in this Department being put to the expense of paying for a special train, and I hope this office will not have to make similar representations again.

I have, &c.,

F. V. WATERS,

Assistant Secretary.

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

No. 125.

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

Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand (Limited),

Dunedin, 19th February, 1914.

SIR,—

In reply to your letter of the 12th February, regarding the transfer of mails from the "Maunganui" at Watson's Bay on the 2nd December, from further inquiries we gather that the mails were properly sorted from the "Maunganui" in the first instance, but owing to the steamer being delayed for medical inspection and being unable to proceed direct to the wharf, the mails had to be landed by launch. The Government launch "Premier" did not take the whole of the bags, and the only means of landing those left was by the company's launch "Potoki," and apparently the labourers mixed the bags.

I would remind you that at the time referred to the labour troubles were at their height, and operations were being carried on under many disadvantages, consequently there was some little confusion, which was inevitable, but I hope it will be realized that everything possible was done under the circumstances.

I have, &c.,

C. HUGHES, Secretary.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

No. 126.

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

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 2nd March, 1914.

In reference to the letter of the 2nd January last, from the manager of your company at Wellington, intimating that the s.s. "Willochra," which was to leave Wellington for Sydney on the 9th idem, would not be able to steam more than about twelve knots, owing to not having