

rities here and the overland railroads to give all possible despatch between New York and San Francisco.

The time between these two points has been shortened six, and not eighteen hours, as you are misinformed; but we are in hopes that the Union Pacific Railroad Company will follow the good example of the Central Pacific Railroad Company and give us a saving of at least six hours between Omaha and Ogden, which will much facilitate our efforts to meet the views of the Hon. the Postmasters-General.

The request for the increased despatch we understood to have emanated equally from your good self with the Hon. the Postmaster-General of New South Wales; and we certainly recognize the propriety of consulting the Post Office Department at Wellington on all matters of like importance, and shall bear your wishes in this regard in mind for future guidance.

Referring to the permission of the colonial Governments to employ the "City of Pekin" and "City of Tokio" on the Australian route, we beg to express our appreciation of the prompt and favourable response of the Postmasters-General to our request.

Since writing same we have received a proposition from the overland railroads to sell to them said vessels, and have given them an option which expires on the 1st of June next.

In event of this bargain not being carried out, we may desire to utilize the said ships in the Australian service, and again thank you for your consent thereto.

Fire on "City of Sydney."

Our San Francisco agents have written us that they have requested the Hon. the Postmasters-General to remit any fines that may accrue on the present voyage of the "City of Sydney" outward for delay beyond her contract time in the delivery of her outward mails. In view of the peculiar circumstances attending this delay, which were entirely beyond our control, we beg that the petition of our agents may find favour at the hands of yourself and the Postmaster-General of New South Wales, and that it may be found proper by your good selves to exercise the discretion allowed by the terms of the contract in our favour.

Commending this matter to your favourable consideration,

I have, &c.,

JOHN RILEY,
President.

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Wellington.

No. 43.

Mr. GRAY to the PRESIDENT, Pacific Mail Steamship Company.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 22nd May, 1880.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 1st April ultimo in reply to mine of the 28th* February last, with reference to the arrangements recently concluded for acceleration of the period occupied in the transit of mails between the United Kingdom and the colony.

Notwithstanding the unfortunate delay in arrival of the mails at San Francisco last month, which prevented the "Australia" sailing on the Saturday, the Postmaster-General still hopes that it will be found practicable to effect the saving of three days on the through journey as a general rule, and he is satisfied that you are doing all in your power to carry out your undertaking successfully.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY,
Secretary.

The President, Pacific Mail Steamship Company,
Pier, foot of Canal Street, N.R., New York.

No. 44.

Mr. CREIGHTON to Mr. GRAY.

SIR,—

San Francisco, 6th April, 1880.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 28th† February last, covering copy of letter from Messrs. Williams, Dimond, and Co., containing a proposal from them, on account of the contractors, for shortening the time between London and Auckland and Sydney by three days, and intimating that the change therein suggested had been accepted by the Postmasters-General of New South Wales and New Zealand.

Unfortunately for the project the present mail, which had been advertised to sail 10th of April, cannot be despatched until Monday, owing to the non-arrival of the mail from New York. This contingency, of course, could not be foreseen; but at this season of the year it is always pretty safe to anticipate detention of the mail *en route* to San Francisco, either on the Atlantic passage or overland. Although the winter has been unusually severe in the Sierras, there has been no snow blockade, the delays being caused by tedious Atlantic passages.

The steamer will be despatched promptly after the receipt of the mail.

I do not think that more than thirty hours, at the utmost, can be "saved" on the passage from London to the terminal points in the colonies unless the railroads run fast trains. This they would do were they paid extra by the United States postal authorities, but there is not the slightest chance of this being done. The steamship companies may make a saving of twenty-four hours at sea by steaming up to the capacity of the vessels, but I think a close inspection of their logs and a comparison of last year's consumption of coal would show that they are doing that already. Of course, I do not wish to discourage the idea that better time may not be made. I hope it may, and I am sure it is the desire of the contractors; but you will be better able to judge by the performance of the "City of Sydney" on the present trip.

When the Southern Pacific Railroad Company connects its road with the Texas Pacific somewhere in New Mexico, an alternative line to New York and a direct line to the Gulf ports will be open. The distance between San Francisco to New Orleans will be 600 miles shorter than to New York; and, as this route will always be open to travel, it may in time be adopted for the transit of the British and

* *Vide* No. 24 of present series.

† *Vide* No. 35 of present series.