

Enclosure in No. 28.

The SECRETARY, Pacific Mail Steamship Company, to the AGENTS-GENERAL, London.
GENTLEMEN,— Pacific Mail Steamship Company, New York, 27th November, 1883.

I am directed by Mr. Houston, President of this Company, to call your attention to the unsatisfactory working of the schedule, as we understand it to be arranged under the new contract with your Governments, although we have not as yet received the official copy from the Postmaster-General, much to our embarrassment and regret.

While the negotiations were pending in August last, Messrs. Gilchrist, Watt, and Co., our general agents in Sydney, cabled us for information as to the fastest lines of trans-Atlantic steamers, and their departures from England and the United States. We cabled them immediately this information very fully, supplementing the telegram with full advices by mail, and had hoped that some consideration would be given to the facts thus presented in the determination on the schedule by the Colonial Governments for the benefit of the San Francisco service and all interested therein.

Much to our regret, we now learn that the Postmaster-General in London announced the departures thence of the last instalment of the first mails despatched thence under the new contract, to be made on the 8th instant, and every fourth Thursday thereafter.

We were also informed by cable from our Sydney agents that the departures from San Francisco would commence with November 23rd, and every fourth Friday succeeding, instead of every fourth Saturday as hitherto; also, that the homeward mail service commences from Sydney with the departure thence December 6th, and every fourth Thursday thereafter.

In view of our previous experience, we trust to be able to make a good showing for the line in the homeward transit of mails under this schedule, as our Postmaster will co-operate with us in expediting them as far as practicable, by sending them forward, as hitherto, by the fastest steamer leaving New York after their arrival here.

But we beg to represent that the selection of Thursday as the day of departure from London, and of a slow line of trans-Atlantic steamers for their conveyance to New York, is certain to operate against the outward expedition; and the setting-back of the date of departure from San Francisco from Saturday to Friday is rendered practically inoperative, except perhaps in one or two individual cases during the summer season.

For example, the mails leaving London on the 8th instant were forwarded by the "City of Berlin," which steamer, under the best of circumstances, could not arrive in New York before the 17th (Saturday), or the 18th (Sunday). As a matter of fact, owing to head winds, she delivered the mails here on Tuesday, the 20th, only in season to go forward by the 8 p.m. train of that date for San Francisco.

This renders the despatch of the mails from San Francisco before Monday, the 26th instant, simply impracticable, although the "City of Sydney" was advertised under the new schedule to leave San Francisco on Friday, the 23rd instant, and intending passengers and shippers were of course governed thereby. In case of any possible detention overland, she may not get away until Tuesday, the 27th, which, we submit, is very prejudicial to the interests of the San Francisco route and all concerned.

In view of these facts, we cannot but regret the decision of the Colonial Governments, as shown in the dates of despatch from London and San Francisco, and would suggest for the good of the service that they be amended at once, either by despatching the last instalment of outward mails from London on Tuesday, if the slow lines of steamers have to be preferred, or returning to the old date of departure from San Francisco, namely, Saturday, which, as a matter of experience, we can safely predict will be the actual date of despatch under the present arrangement much more frequently than Friday, which latter date we are unfortunately obliged to advertise, and thus mislead the public.

We understand that the object in naming Thursday as the day for despatching the mails from London is to alternate at equal intervals with the Suez route; but certainly this consideration should not be made paramount to the other very important features to which we have already referred at length.

We trust that, on a reconsideration of this matter, steps may be taken to meet our views, or at least improve on the present state of affairs.

We enclose copies of correspondence and telegrams referred to; and, asking the favour of an early reply,
I have, &c.,

Hon. S. Samuel, C.M.G., Agent-General for New South Wales, and
Hon. Sir F. D. Bell, K.C.M.G., Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

W. H. LANE,
Secretary.

P.S.—Up to the present moment, 11 a.m., we have received no advice of the sailing of the "City of Sydney" from San Francisco.—28th November: We have since learned that she sailed November 27th, 2 a.m.—W.H.L.

Sub-Enclosure 1 to Enclosure in No. 28.

The SECRETARY, Pacific Mail Steamship Company, to Messrs. GILCHRIST, WATT, and Co.,
Sydney.

GENTLEMEN,— Pacific Mail Steamship Company, New York, 17th August, 1883.

On the 25th we received your despatch reading, "Government ask sailing-day fast Atlantic steamers; arranging new time-table:" and on the 27th we cabled you that the fastest steamers from New York are those of the Guion Line, leaving here on Tuesday. At present it is true that there are but two of these, the "Alaska" and "Arizona;" but by October next Mr. Guion