

No. 31.

The Hon. the PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 19th January, 1899.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your cablegrams of the 7th and 11th instant, and to confirm my reply of the latter date to your first telegram [see Nos. 24, 25, and 26].

I was at a loss to understand how the acceleration of one day between New York and San Francisco had been effected, but information to hand by the Mail Agent on board the "Alameda," who arrived at Auckland yesterday, makes the matter somewhat clearer. The Mail Agent reports that from the 1st instant it was the intention that the fast mail leaving New York at 9 p.m. should in future arrive at San Francisco at 8.45 on the evening of the fourth day, instead of 9.40 on the following morning, and that the east-bound mail-train would reach New York at 5.35 a.m., in place of 10.35 a.m., or a gain of, say, thirteen hours on the west-bound and five hours on the east-bound running. If this information be correct, and the acceleration is to be permanent, it will now be possible to rely on the steamers leaving San Francisco for Auckland on the Wednesday, and to arrange a two-days later despatch from New Zealand, with an assured connection with the fast boats of the American line leaving New York on the Wednesday. Should it be practicable to carry this out it will enable replies by return mail to be sent regularly from Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin. As you are aware, Auckland is the only one of the principal cities which has a reasonably sufficient time for replies at present, although a short interval occasionally offers at Wellington.

The Postmaster-General is obliged for Messrs. R. W. Cameron and Co.'s courteous letter of the 1st ultimo, enclosing time-tables of the principal steamship lines between New York and Great Britain, and other information. He is writing to the firm by the present mail, asking it to confirm the accuracy of the information relative to the acceleration of the train-running. Copy of the letter is enclosed for your information [see No. 32].

I have, &c.,

W. C. WALKER, for the Premier.

The Hon. W. P. Reeves, Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

No. 32.

The Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL to MESSRS. R. W. CAMERON AND Co., New York.

GENTLEMEN,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 19th January, 1899.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1st ultimo, enclosing the latest time-tables of the principal steamship lines from New York to Great Britain, together with other information.

I am exceedingly obliged for your courtesy and the trouble you have taken in the matter. The information will be of great service to the department.

Since the arrival of your letter I am in receipt of a cablegram from the Agent-General for New Zealand in London, to the effect that you had advised him that a saving of a whole day had been secured in the transport of the mails between San Francisco and New York; but, on the Agent-General being asked how this had been obtained, and whether it applied to both the east- and west-bound train-running, he was unable to say, but stated that he would make further inquiries. The result will no doubt be communicated in due course. I am, however, informed by the Mail-agent on board the "Alameda," which arrived at Auckland yesterday, that from the 1st instant it was the intention that the fast mail-train leaving New York at 9 p.m. should reach San Francisco at 8.45 on the evening of the fourth day, instead of 9.40 the following morning, and that the east-bound mail-train should reach New York at 5.35 a.m., instead of 10.35 a.m. If this information be correct, and the acceleration is to be a permanent one, it will now be possible to rely upon the steamers being despatched regularly from San Francisco on the Wednesday, and for a two-days later departure from New Zealand, with an assured connection with the fast boats of the American line leaving New York on the Wednesday, thus giving practically a three-days' longer interval in New Zealand for replies. Should you not already have done so, may I trespass further on your kindness by asking you to confirm the correctness of the information furnished by the Mail-agent, and to inform me whether the new arrangement is likely to be a permanent one?

I am, &c.,

W. C. WALKER, for the Postmaster-General.

Messrs. R. W. Cameron and Co., 23, South William Street, New York.

No. 33.

MESSRS. R. W. CAMERON AND Co., New York, to the Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington.

SIR,—

New York, 20th January, 1899.

We have pleasure in enclosing a copy of our letter to the Agent-General in London in regard to New Zealand mails, in answer to an inquiry as to whether mail-matter arriving in San Francisco on Friday would arrive in New York in time to catch the outgoing American line steamer on the following Wednesday.

We are sorry that the information is not absolutely definite, but you will doubtless appreciate the situation as it exists.

In order that you may thoroughly understand the object of the inquiry, we are enclosing copy of the Agent-General's letter of the 11th instant, now under reply.

We remain, &c.,

R. W. CAMERON AND Co.

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Wellington, New Zealand.