

The change had been fully discussed with the managing director of the Union Steam Ship Company, and acquiesced in by the Postmaster-General of New South Wales. Mr. Mills agreed that, under ordinary circumstances, with a Monday instead of a Saturday departure from Auckland, regular connection at New York should be made with the Wednesday fast steamers of the American line for Southampton. It will, however, be necessary to despatch the steamers from Auckland at noon, so as to allow the full contract-time for the voyage to San Francisco, and a reasonable interval for the transfer of the mails from the steamer to the train for New York.

It will no doubt occasionally happen that the trains will reach New York late, and it is assumed that it will be possible, whenever unavoidable, to detain the steamer for Southampton a few hours for the mails. I shall be obliged, therefore, if you will communicate with the representatives of the American line of steamers and the Postmaster, New York, to secure such detention.

Messrs. R. W. Cameron and Co., of New York, have been asked to use their influence in the same direction.

It is highly important that the first mail under the accelerated running should reach London on the due date. This should receive your special attention.

H. Stephenson Smith, Esq.,
Resident Agent for New Zealand, San Francisco.

I have, &c.,
W. GRAY, Secretary.

No. 53.

The Hon. the PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 14th February, 1899.

Referring to my letter of the 1st instant, I have now the honour to inform you that, the Government of New South Wales having agreed to the San Francisco steamers leaving Sydney and Auckland two days later than at present, it has been definitely decided to bring the change into operation next month, of which I advised you by cable this morning.

By the new arrangement there should, under ordinary circumstances, be an assured connection at New York with the Wednesday fast steamers of the American line for Southampton. The trains, however, may occasionally reach New York late, and this may involve a short detention of the Atlantic steamers, which I am hopeful can be arranged. Messrs. Cameron and Co. have been asked to use their good offices with the steamship proprietary in this direction, and Mr. Smith, our agent at San Francisco, will also approach the steamship company, as well as the Postmaster, New York, to the same end.

The change is one which will materially improve the service as a mail-line. Not only will it be possible for Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin, as well as Auckland, to reply by return mail, but the time from the colony to London will be reduced to thirty days.

I have, &c.,
T. THOMPSON, for the Premier.

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

No. 54.

The RESIDENT AGENT for NEW ZEALAND, San Francisco, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

San Francisco, 14th February, 1899.

RECOMMEND you not to despatch later Sunday. Connections too close. Fast German steamers Tuesdays till July. "Germanic" sunk in harbour. No Atlantic steamer 15th February.

No. 55.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to Messrs. R. W. CAMERON AND Co., New York.

GENTLEMEN,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 16th February, 1899.

I have the honour, by direction, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 20th ultimo, enclosing copy of one addressed by you to the Agent-General for this colony in London, in answer to an inquiry as to whether mail-matter arriving at San Francisco on Friday would reach New York in time to catch the outgoing American line steamer on the following Wednesday.

In reply, I have to inform you that the possibility of the mails failing to connect with the American line of steamers at New York on the Wednesday with a two-days later departure from Auckland was considered so very remote that, as you will have already learned from the Minister's letter of the 10th instant, it has been decided to change the sailing-day from Auckland from Saturday until the following Monday.

I have, &c.,
W. GRAY, Secretary.

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