

formation came to hand on the morning of that date that only four bags—three for Honolulu and one for Sydney—to go forward by the “Alameda” were amongst those delayed. It is considered that the time of sailing should not have been altered until more definite information came to hand, but in any case the Resident Agent for this colony, or the Mail Agent, should have been consulted. In future instances of the kind you will no doubt instruct that this shall be done.

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

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

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[Read here No. 238.]

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No. 107.

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

Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand (Limited), Dunedin,  
21st November, 1898.

SIR,—

I have to acknowledge receipt of your favour of the 14th instant, with regard to the postponing of the sailing of the “Alameda.” We have sent a copy of your letter to our San Francisco agents, Messrs. J. D. Spreckels and Brothers Company, and at the same time have asked them to consult the Resident Agent for this colony or the Mail Agent when altering the times of steamers’ sailings.

I have, &c.,  
T. W. WHITSON, for Managing Director.

W. Gray, Esq., Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

No. 108.

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

SIR,— Resident Agency for New Zealand, San Francisco, 30th November, 1898.

In reference to the delay reported in the despatch of the last steamer for the colonies from this port, I have the honour to enclose a communication received from the New York Post Office in response to my letter of inquiry into the cause for the delay. The action of the captain of the “Etruria,” as reported, would appear to be a remarkable one, and I presume the department will refer the matter to the head office of the Cunard Company. The delay at this end was a little over ten hours.

I have also to report another case of detention to-day caused by the misconnection of an important portion of the eastern American mail, which caused some twelve hours’ detention at this port. In connection with this matter, I enclose copies of telegrams received by me from the New York office, and also desire to point out that, in authorising this detention, I have not strictly obeyed the instructions contained in your communication of the 18th September last [No. 97, F.—6, 1898], as that letter only authorises a detention when the “entire mail has not connected.” I would state that such a contingency is scarcely possible, as the United States mail is made up of contributions from many sources *en route*, and does not at any time entirely depend on any one train. In view, however, of the fact that the department is indebted to the New York office for many acts of consideration by its officials, in very prompt and zealous handling of our mails to make the close connections often required at the Atlantic seaboard, I trust the department will approve of my action in this case; and, further, I would ask that the department modify the instructions contained in the letter referred to, so as to leave this matter to my discretion.

I have, &c.,  
H. STEPHENSON SMITH, Resident Agent.

W. Gray, Esq., Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

Enclosure 1 in No. 108.

The POSTMASTER, New York, to the RESIDENT AGENT FOR NEW ZEALAND, San Francisco.

DEAR SIR,— Post Office, New York, 21st November, 1898.

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your favour under date of the 10th instant [not printed], and, in reply to the second paragraph contained therein, have to say that the delay in despatch from New York of the four sacks of Australian mail was due to refusal of the captain of the s.s. “Etruria” to deliver all the mails to the mail-boat at quarantine. This resulted in part of the mail being delivered at the General Post Office, but not in time for the four sacks in question to be forwarded by the 9 p.m. train of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad on the 29th October. They were consequently delayed for the 8.45 a.m. train next day.

The excuse offered by the Cunard Company for failure of the s.s. “Etruria’s” captain to deliver all the mail to the mail-boat is that the captain was anxious to dock the steamer before sundown, so that the passengers could disembark.

Very respectfully,  
C. VAN COTT, Postmaster.

Mr. H. Stephenson Smith,  
Resident Agent of the New Zealand Government, San Francisco.