

officer in charge at that point to immediately report the occurrence to you at San Francisco, such report to give the origin and destination of all trans-Pacific mails delayed, special care being taken to state whether the mails contain letters or newspapers. You undoubtedly will recognise the importance of these mails being identified thus, as the question of the detention of the mail-steamer and its attendant expense will generally hinge upon the description of the delayed mails.

In the case referred to above it will probably be within your recollection that, while the report of the misconnection of these mails reached this city some thirty hours prior to the date and hour scheduled for the departure of the contract mail-steamer, yet it was only within some four hours of her proposed departure that the identity of the missing mails was known. You will confer a favour if you will represent the importance of issuing such instructions from the head of your service as will assure in future the necessary information being telegraphed in case of accident or detention to the foreign mails in transit.

In connection with the matter now under review, you would also confer a favour if you could obtain for the information of my Government an explanation of the cause of the delay to the mails reported from Chicago which did not reach this city until 7.35 p.m. on 22nd instant, a delay of over twenty-six hours.

Regretting to trouble you in this matter,

I have, &c.,

H. STEPHENSON SMITH, Resident Agent for New Zealand.

H. P. Thrall, Esq., Superintendent of the Railway Mail-service, San Francisco.

Enclosure 2 in No. 56.

The SUPERINTENDENT, Railway Mail-service, San Francisco, to the SUPERINTENDENT, Railway Mail-service, Chicago.

Railway Mail-service, Office of Superintendent, Eighth Division,
San Francisco, California, 31st March, 1900.

SIR,—

I enclose herewith a letter from Mr. H. Stephenson Smith, Resident Agent for New Zealand, dated San Francisco, 30th March, 1900, with reference to information desired by telegraph in the event the through closed mails for New Zealand and Australia miss connection at any point *en route* across the United States. He also calls attention to the fact that in the last instance of this kind we were unable to obtain definite information as to the character of the mails that were delayed at Chicago until but a few hours before the schedule time for the sailing of this steamer.

On the 19th instant you wired me as follows: "36 sacks trans-Pacific mail missed 15 last night. Will send on train 1 to-day." On the 20th I wired you as follows: "Your wire yesterday: Were the 36 bags trans-Pacific referred to closed mails for Australia from New York City." To this you replied: "The delayed trans-Pacific mails were from London, Dublin, and New York."

I presume my telegram did not convey to you the idea that we very much desired to know whether the mails referred to were the closed mails for Australia and New Zealand. We could have inferred that these mails were for these countries, except for the fact that the "Gaelic," carrying mails for China and Japan, was scheduled to leave San Francisco but two days later than the "Mariposa," carrying mails for Australia and New Zealand. The matter was then taken up by wire with Chief Clerk Moore, at Ogden, to obtain a description of the missing bags, and he replied that these mails were not checked from waybill, except to count the total number of sacks received. This made it impossible to obtain any information as to the character of the missing mails until they reached Ogden, 21st March, twenty-four hours late.

Will you kindly furnish an explanation of the cause of the delay to these mails at Chicago, 18th March?

Very respectfully,

H. P. THRALL, Superintendent.

Mr. E. L. West, Superintendent, Railway Mail-service, Chicago, Illinois.

Enclosure 3 in No. 56.

The SUPERINTENDENT, RAILWAY MAIL-SERVICE, San Francisco, to the RESIDENT AGENT for NEW ZEALAND, San Francisco.

Railway Mail-service, Office of Superintendent Eighth Division,
San Francisco, Cal., 9th April, 1900.

SIR,—

Referring to your letter of the 30th ultimo, I am this date in receipt of the following from Superintendent West, of Chicago, which explains the delay in transfer at Chicago on the 18th March of a quantity of New Zealand mail-matter from the New York and Chicago train No. 35 to the Chicago and Council Bluffs No. 15:—

"Returning your correspondence of 31st March, relative to delay at Chicago in transferring mails on 18th March, I beg to state that on that date New York and Chicago train 35 was wrecked within the city limits. Fortunately most of the trans-Pacific mails were stalled in the car which was on this side of the break, and were immediately brought to Chicago and connected. The thirty-six sacks which missed connection were in the rear of the train, and did not arrive in Chicago until about 4.30 a.m., missing connection with both trains, 15 and 7; consequently we had to despatch them the following day on train 1. The delay was unavoidable, and every effort was made to connect these mails as expeditiously as possible. I have arranged in cases of this