

## Enclosure 2 in No. 81.

EXTRACT from CONTRACT between the United States Government and the Oceanic Steamship Company to convey United States Mails between San Francisco and Sydney (New South Wales), *via* Ports.

CONTRACT to commence on the 1st November, 1900, and to continue for ten years thereafter. Vessels to be not less than 5,000 tons gross. Time consumed on trip, twenty-one days. Vessels to maintain a speed of seventeen knots in ordinary weather. Remuneration to be 2 dollars per mile travelled on each outward trip. Distance to be estimated by the United States Government Hydrographic Department. Route to be from San Francisco to Sydney (New South Wales), *via* Honolulu, Pago Pago (Samoan Islands), and Auckland (New Zealand). Vessels must be fitted to carry ordnance in accordance with Government requirements, and to be subject to being taken into the United States Navy Department at any time. Compensation therefor to be fixed by arbitration. The United States Government to have the right to cancel contract at any time if any of the provisions of the contract be not fulfilled. First year, at least one-fourth of the crew; next three years, one-third; and the remainder of the term, one-half of the crew must be citizens of the United States. Free passage and accommodation to be furnished for one United States mail-messenger on each trip. One trip to be made every three weeks.

## Notes.

No specific amount of money is mentioned as the remuneration, only the 2 dollars per mile traversed on each outward trip. There does not appear to be, from the brief inspection I was enabled to get of the document, any provision for bonus for accelerated delivery, nor fines for delays. Nor does there appear to be any stipulation as to power of the United States to hold vessels at this or other ports in order to insure connections in case of delays or accidents. It would therefore look as if these points would have to be fully covered in case any contract were entered into on behalf of the colonies.

H. S. S.

## No. 82.

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

Resident Agency for New Zealand, San Francisco,  
3rd September, 1900.

SIR,—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your communications of the 31st July and 3rd August [not printed].

In respect to the delay in reporting the arrival of the "Alameda" for some twenty-four hours after the announcement of the steamer's arrival had been received by private persons, I would state that the "Alameda" arrived in this port about 6 p.m. on the 26th July, and was immediately sent over to the Quarantine Island by the United States authorities, and no doubt the passenger was enabled to send ashore a cable message by the quarantine tender which would be sent off that evening. It has always been my custom to delay the sending of the cable announcing the arrival of the steamers until the Mail-agent reports, as on several occasions the Agent has had instructions to add some word or words to the cable. In this case the mails and passengers did not land in San Francisco until about noon on Friday, and I did not see the Mail Agent until late in the afternoon, but I think advices should have reached you early on the morning of the 28th. It is quite possible the report of the "Mariposa's" arrival this time may be delayed for a similar reason. It will be quite easy for me to report the arrival of these vessels immediately on arrival if it is so desired, but I cannot then await report from the Mail-agents.

I have, &amp;c.,

H. STEPHENSON SMITH, Resident Agent.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

## No. 83.

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

Resident Agency for New Zealand, San Francisco,  
5th September, 1900.

SIR,—

I am in receipt of your favour of the 3rd August [not printed].

The matter of delays in the overland transit has given me considerable thought, and the explanations given each time are not entirely satisfactory, as it appears now to be more the rule than the exception that the Chicago connection with the fast mail is missed. I am just in receipt of information that this time again the same thing has occurred, and that the mails did not connect with the steamer "New York," of the International line. These repeated misconnections seem quite unreasonable, and cause me much worry. I feel that we are in some measure helpless. These railroads are owned and run by the immense railroad corporations, who recognise no authority, not even that of the United States Government.