

Eighth Division, on the matter of the failure of the train conveying the homeward mails to connect with the onward train at Chicago on the 28th August last. As will be noted from Mr. Smith's letter to this office, a similar failure has occurred at the same point this month.

As such delays may at any time result in mails missing connection with the steamers at New York, I should be much obliged if you would kindly take any action you may think proper in the matter.

The Hon. the Postmaster-General, Washington, D.C.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY, Secretary.

No. 104.

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

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 27th October, 1900.

I have the honour to forward herewith copies of cablegrams which have passed between yourself and this department since the 22nd ultimo, on the subject of the continuance of the San Francisco mail-service. I also attach copy of a letter to Messrs. J. D. Spreckels and Brothers Company [No. 30] on the same subject.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY, Secretary.

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

No. 105.

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

SIR,—

Resident Agency for New Zealand, San Francisco, 30th October, 1900.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of cables from the department, reading as follows: [Nos. 16, 90, and 97]. On receipt of each of these cables I at once consulted with Messrs. Spreckels and Brothers Company, and the following replies were the most definite they would commit themselves to, as follows: [Nos. 91, 93, and 96].

I felt that the information that I was enabled to give would not be considered sufficiently definite, but I was unable to get from Messrs. Spreckels and Brothers any definite statement. The "Sierra" left Philadelphia on the 11th October for this port, and the owners anticipate that she will make the run in thirty-five days, but I am rather dubious as to the accomplishment of this time. Even if thirty-eight days is consumed in the trip, a margin of three days will be given for preparation for the voyage. I think it is a pity that more time is not given, as after such a long trip it is more than probable that some repairs will be necessary. I am also advised that the second steamer, the "Sonoma," will not reach here in time to leave on the 12th December, and that the "Mariposa" will take her place.

I have no knowledge of what arrangements have been made, if any, to supply the place of the "Moana" for the homeward mails due here on the 14th December, but probably the department has made arrangements in the matter.

I have, &c.,

H. STEPHENSON SMITH, Resident Agent.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

No. 106.

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

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 31st October, 1900.

LONDON has decided despatch mails 10th November.

No. 107.

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

SIR,—

Resident Agency for New Zealand, San Francisco, 31st October, 1900.

The "Alameda" will get away, I anticipate, at about midnight, the overland train being reported an hour and a half late, which will bring it in, if not further delayed, at 8 p.m. The vessel goes out, I hear, loaded down to the guards, and the "Sierra" is already a full ship.

I am sorry I was not able to give you more definite replies to your inquiries in respect to the sailing of the "Sierra," and fully realised the importance of reliable information; but Messrs. Spreckels Brothers would not guarantee anything. If no unforeseen accident occurs, I think they will be able to start the first vessel on the date determined, although it will give little, if any, time to refit after the long voyage from the Atlantic seaboard.

I also received just now your cable informing me that the London office had decided to despatch their mails from London on the 10th, which I presume are intended for the "Sierra." As reported elsewhere, the "Sonoma" will not be here in time for the 12th December, and the "Mariposa" will make another trip. I suppose the homeward mails intended for the "Moana" will be sent *via* Vancouver, as Messrs. Spreckels Brothers inform me that the "Moana" will not return.