

(No. 21.)

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the PREMIER,
Westminster Chambers, 13, Victoria Street, London, S.W.,
29th April, 1896.

SIR,—

Referring to my letter of the 16th instant, I beg herewith to transmit copy of letter which I have received from the London General Post Office, by which it will be seen that the Cunard Company have stated that it will not be possible at present to transfer the "Campania" or "Lucania" to other Saturdays than those indicated in the company's sailing-list for the current year.

You will observe that Mr. Buxton Forman states that the "Aurania," which is specially referred to by Mr. Stephenson Smith, has not carried the New Zealand mails for more than a year.

I have written to Mr. Smith, giving him the information contained in Mr. Buxton Forman's letter, and informing him that he has apparently been misinformed as regards the "Aurania."

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

W. P. REEVES.

(Enclosure in No. 21.)

The ASSISTANT SECRETARY, General Post Office, London, to the AGENT-GENERAL.

DEAR SIR,—

General Post Office, London, 24th April, 1896.

With reference to the conversation which took place in Mr. Walpole's room when you called here on the 16th instant, I cannot but think that some misunderstanding must exist in regard to the steamers by which the mails from this country for New Zealand are carried to New York. The "Aurania," the steamer to whose performance you particularly took exception, is not, I find, one of those which carry the mails for New Zealand, and has not done so for more than a year. These mails appear to be carried by the "Etruria" and "Umbria," both of which take a day less than the "Aurania" in getting to New York.

Nevertheless, I wrote to Sir John Burns on the day of your visit, calling his particular attention to the advantages of sending these mails by the "Campania" and "Lucania," and inquiring whether a change in that sense could be made. I have received a reply, from which it appears that the sailings of the steamers are fixed early in the spring for each Saturday during the year, and are arranged with great care and deliberation according to the exigencies of trade; that it would not be possible at present to transfer the "Campania" or "Lucania" to other Saturdays than those indicated in the company's sailing-list for the current year; but that it will no doubt happen in some future seasons, as it has happened in the past, that those two steamers will be despatched to take the New Zealand mails.

From the following table, which gives the average length of voyage from Queenstown to New York during 1895 for each of the five steamers mentioned, and also the shortest voyage, you will see that there is less difference between the performance of the "Campania" and "Lucania," and that of the "Etruria" and "Umbria," than there is between that of the two last-named steamers and that of the "Aurania":—

Name of Steamer.	Average Length of Voyage.	Shortest Period occupied.
	D. h. m.	D. h. m.
"Lucania"	5 19 52	5 14 10
"Campania"	5 23 52	5 12 55
"Etruria"	6 11 37	6 4 3
"Umbria"	6 17 48	6 4 58
"Aurania"	7 12 58	7 6 10

The Hon. Wm. Pember Reeves,
Agent-General for New Zealand.

Believe me, &c.,

H. BUXTON FORMAN.

II. Draft letters from the following notes:—

(a.) Reply to M. Johnson's letter, 14/12/01, to Min. of Marine.

Permission asked for cannot be granted, seeing removal of tuatara and eggs of tuatara forbidden. Keepers of lighthouses have strict instructions not to permit unauthorised psns. collect eggs or lizards. If Mr. J. can produce evdnce. ability and intention to make good use of matl. in investgtg. anatom. and physiol. peculiarities of tuatara, quesn. of grantg. him permn. to collect will be reconsdd., but it must be shown that appliances and means of making good use of matl. are suffict. In any case, he will on no account be allowed to send matl. out of the col. direct, as he proposes. In the few cases in wh. it is held that matl. may properly be sent to workers in other countries, it is sent through this office. G.M., 21/12/01.

(b.) Petn. of T. Peterson and others, 10/12/01.

Ackn. recpt. Regret to hve. to say no fds. fr. wh. this Dept. cd. build bridge over Orini. Remind petnrs. that at time of appln. for school on opp. side to village, Dept. anticipated appln. for a bridge, and told them that it supposed that a request wd. be made at a later time, and that, if made, it wd. have to be decl'd. The people then sd. no such appln. wd. be made, pointg. out that water was calm and crossg. quite safe for canoe or boat. T.H., 20/12/01.