

with the alteration in the day of departure of our steamers from Auckland. We note from a telegram just to hand that the "Sierra" arrived at San Francisco last Monday at 9 a.m., which is a very creditable performance, especially as she was not actually due at that port till 4 p.m. [time-table hour, 6 a.m.].

We have, &c.,

HENDERSON AND MACFARLANE,
General Agents for New Zealand.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

No. 86.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to Messrs. HENDERSON and MACFARLANE, Auckland.

GENTLEMEN,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 5th June, 1902.

Referring to previous correspondence, and more particularly to your letter of the 31st ultimo, to my telegram of the 4th instant, and to yours of the same day [not printed]: I have now the honour to forward you two copies of the contract, duly signed by the Postmaster-General, for transmission to Messrs. the J. D. Spreckels and Bros. Company for completion by its representatives empowered to execute such legal documents on behalf of the company.

In the event of Messrs. Spreckels declining to sign the contract unless clause 9 is amended by the insertion of "seventy-two" in the place of "ninety-six" hours, it is to be understood that any such amendment shall not be binding on the Postmaster-General, who shall have the right to reopen the question of the detention of the mail-steamers at San Francisco for the British mails, when late.

I trust that your personal influence may be used to induce Messrs. Spreckels to sign the contract as it stands, so that it may have the force of law without further delay.

Messrs. Henderson and Macfarlane, Auckland.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY, Secretary.

No. 87.

Messrs. HENDERSON and MACFARLANE, Auckland, to the Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

Oceanic Steamship Company (American and Australian Line),
Auckland, 9th June, 1902.

SIR,—

We have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your two favours of the 5th instant, one enclosing two copies of the mail contract signed by the Postmaster-General, which have been forwarded for execution by Messrs. the J. D. Spreckels and Bros. Company, and the other acknowledging receipt of our letter of the 29th ultimo [No. 136] withdrawing claim for compensation on account of the "Sierra," sailed from San Francisco 9th February last. Commenting on the former, we quite understand that, should the J. D. Spreckels and Bros. Company decline to sign the contract without an amendment in clause 9 the New Zealand Postmaster-General will have the right to reopen the question in respect of the limit of detention of the mail-steamers at San Francisco waiting for the British mails when late. We might add in the same connection that we have urged our principals to sign the contract as it stands, and pointed out in support of our request that the risk of a longer delay than seventy-two hours at San Francisco is very slight.

With every hope, therefore, that your copy of the contract will come back duly executed according to its present reading,

We have, &c.,

HENDERSON AND MACFARLANE,
General Agents for New Zealand.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

No. 88.

Messrs. HENDERSON and MACFARLANE, Auckland, to the Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

Oceanic Steamship Company (American and Australian Line),
Auckland, 9th June, 1902.

SIR,—

With regard to the hour of sailing in future, our Sydney agents advise us that the steamers will leave their port at 1 p.m. as hitherto, so that the usual sailing-hour from this port—viz., 2 p.m.—will be still adhered to.

Yours, &c.,

HENDERSON AND MACFARLANE.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

No. 89.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to Messrs. HENDERSON and MACFARLANE, Auckland.

GENTLEMEN,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 11th June, 1902.

I have the honour to inform you that a claim has been made by this office on the Colonial Postmaster, Suva [No. 67], on account of Fijian mail-matter sent to Auckland for transmission by the steamers of the San Francisco service, as from the 1st July, 1901. It is proposed