

No. 31.

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

SIR,—

Resident Agency for New Zealand, San Francisco, 7th September, 1904.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your communications of the 2nd August, with reference to the 20th Century Limited train on the Lake Shore and Michigan Central Railroad, and also the question of giving an earlier hour of departure to the steamers from Auckland, as suggested by the Cunard Steamship Company, which I learn to be impracticable.

I would state in this connection that the mails *ex* "Sierra" just despatched from New York received the benefit of the carriage by the 20th Century Limited from Chicago upon this occasion: but in this case there was no necessity for the use of this train, as the mails had ample time to connect by the ordinary trains. However, it is perhaps as well to establish the practice of using this train for the letter-portion of the mails as agreed.

I have, &c.,

H. STEPHENSON SMITH, Resident Agent.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

No. 32.

The Hon. the PRIME MINISTER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Prime Minister's Office, Wellington, 13th September, 1904.

I have the honour to inform you that the Resident Agent for New Zealand at San Francisco advises that arrangements have now been made whereby the letter portion of the Australasian Homeward mail will be transmitted by the fast 20th Century Limited train from Chicago to New York when necessary to do so to insure connection with the steamer at New York. The concession should tend to minimise delay in arrival of our mails in London.

I have, &c.,

J. G. WARD, for the Prime Minister.

The Hon. W. P. Reeves, Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

No. 33.

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

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 13th September, 1904.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 17th ultimo, covering copy of one from Mr. H. P. Thrall, Superintendent of the United States Railway Mail-service (eighth division), San Francisco, announcing that arrangements had been made for the carriage of the letter portion of the Australasian mail from Chicago to New York on the fast 20th Century Limited train when necessary to do so to make steamer connection at New York.

I have to thank you for your efforts to obtain the concession, which the Department much appreciates. The improvement should minimise the delay in arrival of the mail in London. Perhaps you will be so good as to convey the Department's thanks to Mr. Thrall.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY, Secretary.

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

No. 34.

MESSRS. HENDERSON AND MACFARLANE, Auckland, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

Oceanic Steamship Company (American and Australian Line),

SIR,—

Auckland, 28th September, 1904.

We have the honour to refer you to your communications of the 2nd and 3rd August, dealing with the delay of the "Sierra" at San Francisco till the 8th July, and the late arrival of our mails in London, and have now the pleasure of quoting from a letter from Messrs. the J. D. Spreckels and Bros. Company, San Francisco, dealing with the two points.

"Sierra" from San Francisco.

"In response to your communication of the 12th August, relative to departure of 'Sierra' from San Francisco at 2 o'clock, 8th July, instead of immediately after arrival of the British mails at 7 p.m. on the 7th, we would state that the time was lost through detention caused by installation of two new propellers on the vessel, and the fact that we could not secure dry dock as early as we had expected."

Late Arrival of Mails in London.

"Referring to the transmission of the Australian-New Zealand mail overland, and mails of the R.M.S. 'Sierra' missing the Saturday boat, 2nd July: The steamer of the Cunard Line, 2nd July, was the 'Lucania,' and it went out in the early morning (Saturday). The mails arrived in New York about 10 a.m. the same day. According to the time-table of the Post Office Department, the mail despatched on Monday at 6 p.m. from here (San Francisco) should have arrived in New York at 4 a.m. The next sailing from New York for England was the White Star