

No. 47.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to the GENERAL MANAGER, Union Steam Ship Company, Dunedin.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 16th December, 1911.

I have the honour to refer to the trip of the R.M.S. "Maitai," ended on the 8th instant. The trip from San Francisco occupied 524 hours, nineteen hours over the contract time. The vessel arrived at Rarotonga on the 29th ultimo at 3.40 p.m., and did not get away from there until 1.25 a.m. on Friday, the 1st instant; and no doubt this detention contributed to the late arrival of the mail at Wellington. In your telegram of the 3rd July last you informed me that the steamers would not be detained at Rarotonga beyond about 6 p.m. on Thursdays. I shall be glad of your remarks.

I have, &c.,

D. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

The General Manager, Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand (Limited), Dunedin.

[Wn.—S.F. 11/317.]

No. 48.

The GENERAL MANAGER, Union Steam Ship Company, Dunedin, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand (Limited),

SIR,—

Dunedin, 3rd January, 1912.

In reply to your letter of the 16th ultimo, regarding the late arrival of the "Maitai" on the 8th idem, I have to submit, for your consideration, the special circumstances, which were as follows: The "Maitai" arrived at Rarotonga at 3.24 p.m., Wednesday, 29th November (Western time), she not being due there until Thursday morning. Handling of cargo in the open roadstead is, however, very slow work, and on Thursday afternoon, when the ship was due to sail, there still remained a quantity of fruit to be shipped. Our standing instructions are that the steamer must not be delayed beyond about 6 p.m., but with a proviso that if there is perishable cargo to be shipped, and the master considers the weather indications favourable for a good run to Wellington, he may, at his own discretion, remain an hour or two longer. On this occasion the captain of the "Maitai" anticipated being able easily to make up his lost time, but, unfortunately, the steamer ran into a succession of westerly gales, with very heavy head sea, shortly after leaving Rarotonga, and until arrival at Wellington. Nearing Wellington it became apparent that nothing would be gained by pressing against the adverse weather to arrive after dark on Thursday, so a daylight arrival on Friday was aimed at.

As the prime cause of the delay was the desire to prevent the loss of perishable cargo at Rarotonga, we trust that the foregoing explanation will be considered satisfactory.

I have, &c.,

R. McK. McLENNAN, for General Manager.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

[Wn.—S.F. 12/4.]

No. 49.

The GENERAL MANAGER, Union Steam Ship Company, Dunedin, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand (Limited),

SIR,—

Dunedin, 3rd January, 1912.

Referring to our letter of this date in explanation of the late arrival of "Maitai" from San Francisco on the 8th ultimo, the question again arises as to whether, when all the fruit offering at Rarotonga cannot be placed aboard in time to let the steamer away to Wellington by, say, 6 p.m. on their Thursday, the steamer should not wait a few hours longer. If it can be shown that the steamer reached Rarotonga up to time, and that all due diligence was exercised in prosecution of the voyage from there to Wellington, will you be satisfied to let her remain at Rarotonga until, say, midnight rather than leave perishable cargo behind?

I have, &c.,

R. McK. McLENNAN, for General Manager.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

[Wn.—S.F. 12/6.]

No. 50.

The GENERAL MANAGER, Union Steam Ship Company, Dunedin, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand (Limited),

SIR,—

Dunedin, 5th January, 1912.

As it appears unnecessary now to despatch the San Francisco steamers from New Zealand so close upon the sailing dates of the Vancouver service, we beg to suggest that while we continue to employ three steamers to maintain the running between San Francisco and New Zealand and Australia, they might be despatched a week earlier from this end, maintaining the dates as at present time-tabled from San Francisco. If you are agreeable to the change we contemplate accelerating the sailing on the 30th March to the 23rd March from Sydney and the 29th March from Wellington, with succeeding despatches every twenty-eight days, provided that we shall be at liberty to revert to the current order of sailings at any time on giving, say, two months' notice of change.