

No. 4.

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

Resident Agency for New Zealand, 311 California Street,
San Francisco, 16th May, 1913.

SIR,—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 15th April last, in respect of the late arrival in England of the mails conveyed to this port by the s.s. "Moana."

I would report in this connection that the "Moana" arrived at this port on the 20th March about midday, the mails going forward that evening, and arriving at New York at 8.45 a.m. on the 25th. There were no steamers leaving New York between the 22nd and the 26th March; the mails were sent forward at noon of the 26th (the first opportunity after arrival) by the steamer "Megantic," of the White Star line, a slow boat. This vessel did not arrive at Liverpool until the 4th April, which lengthened the time occupied in transmission from here to fifteen days instead of ten days, as is usual when connection is made with the fast Cunarders. There does not appear to have been any fault on the part of any of the conveyances; it was simply a case of bad luck.

In connection with the above I would report that there has been a similar delay in the delivery in England of the mails received here on the 19th April per s.s. "Aorangi." The vessel arrived early in the morning, and the mails went forward by the 10.20 a.m. train, arriving in New York on the 23rd at 9.30 a.m., leaving New York on the 25th at 10 a.m., arriving at Liverpool on the 3rd May. On this occasion the late arrival of the "Aorangi" caused the loss of the "Mauretania" connection at midnight of Tuesday, the 22nd. That vessel arrived in Liverpool on the 29th April, which would have been nearly time-table date. The steamer "New York," of the American line, took eight days to cross to Plymouth.

To ensure the best connections the steamers of the Union line should arrive here on Thursdays in time to connect with the 10.20 a.m. train for New York, which means an arrival here not later than 7 a.m. There is, of course, a fast train now running from here at 2 p.m.: this is a train *de luxe*, and the Railway authorities decline to carry a mail-car. I think upon an emergency, however, I could get the letter portion of the mails sent upon this train. You will probably recollect that we got this concession in respect of the New York Lake Shore 20th Century train out of Chicago for New York, which does not carry mails as a usual condition.

I trust the above information will explain the last two delays, only one of which is attributable to the Union Steam Ship Company.

I have, &c.,

H. STEPHENSON SMITH,

Resident Agent for the Dominion of New Zealand.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

[P. & T. 36/5.]

No. 5.

The SECRETARY, Wellington Harbour Board, Wellington, to the Hon. the PRIME MINISTER, Wellington.

SIR,—

Wellington Harbour Board, Wellington, 27th May, 1913.

I am directed by the Chairman of the Board to draw your attention to what the Board considers the injustice of the exemption provided by section 116, subsection (1), clause (d) of the Harbours Act, 1908.

Under this section the Postmaster-General has power to exempt any vessel carrying mails under contract from the payment of harbour dues. Thus a vessel arriving with mails under Government contract occupies a berth and receives services free of the usual charges, whilst cargo carried by such vessel escapes the harbour-improvement rate which would otherwise be leviable. This is manifestly an injustice not only to the Board but to other trading vessels frequenting the port. The Board's revenue at the present time suffers considerably from the operation of the section, and if the power were further exercised the effect would, of course, be still more serious.

I would therefore respectfully ask that you consider the advisability of repealing the section above referred to, and in the meantime to exercise the Government's right to withhold the exemption in any future mail-contract which may be entered into.

I have, &c.,

H. E. NICHOLLS, Secretary.

The Hon. the Prime Minister, Wellington.

[Wn.—S.F. 13/19.]

No. 6.

The Hon. the PRIME MINISTER, Wellington, to the SECRETARY, Wellington Harbour Board, Wellington.

SIR,—

Prime Minister's Office, Wellington, 28th May, 1913.

I am in receipt of your letter of yesterday's date relative to the exemption of mail-steamers from the payment of harbour dues in accordance with the provisions of the Harbours