

the Friday week following the departure from Southampton of the heavy mail by P. and O., made up in London on Wednesday evening. The San Francisco mail is at present made up on the Thursday evening (the day after the Southampton). To make it alternate fortnightly with Brindisi, it would have to be antedated some five or six days, so as to leave on the Friday or Saturday before Wednesday's Southampton. This would be about a fortnight before Brindisi, and for light or urgent correspondence it would probably work well; but as a fortnight before Brindisi means only five days before Southampton, I fear that a very large amount of heavy matter, letters not requiring urgency, accounts, book packets, &c., would, for the sake of the five days' additional time, and in the absence of any cogent reason for immediate despatch by San Francisco, be kept back for Southampton (the postages being the same). This will be the possible result of any attempt at this end to establish a fortnightly 'Frisco and Brindisi service; and it will only be avoided by making the 'Frisco day of departure later than the Southampton. This is now done, and at the same time the nearest desirable attempt at alternation with Brindisi is effected by despatching the 'Frisco on the day after Southampton, being eight days before Brindisi.

Any change which makes the 'Frisco departure earlier, say by five or six days, than the Southampton, will, I fear, seriously diminish the revenue derived from the San Francisco postage account.

16th December, 1876.

A. A. JOPP.

Enclosure 5 in No. 159.

MR. FORSTER TO MR. TILLEY.

SIR,—

London, 18th December, 1876.

In reply to your letter of the 14th instant, relative to the proposed alteration in the day of departure from London in January next of the mails for New South Wales and New Zealand *via* San Francisco, I have the honor to intimate, after consultation with the Agent-General for New Zealand, as suggested in your letter, that while neither Sir Julius Vogel nor myself has any power to alter the days fixed in the time table for the San Francisco Mail Service (such power being vested in the two colonial Postmasters-General), we are disposed to advise that in the event of your being unable to despatch the January mails on the Thursday as usual, it would be preferable to delay them until the following Saturday (Cunard), rather than to send them on the previous Wednesday (Guion).

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, General Post Office, London.

WILLIAM FORSTER.

Enclosure 6 in No. 159.

MR. PAGE TO MR. FORSTER.

SIR,—

General Post Office, London, 19th December, 1876.

Having laid before the Postmaster-General your letter of yesterday's date, replying to mine of the 14th instant, on the subject of the arrangements necessary for despatching the mails for New South Wales and New Zealand in January next, consequent on there being no packet to convey mails to New York on Thursdays, I am directed by His Lordship to inform you that he readily consents to adopt the alternative which you and the Agent-General for New Zealand have suggested as the preferable one—that is, to despatch the mails for New South Wales and New Zealand on the evening of Saturday, the 13th January, for conveyance by the Cunard packet. A notice on the subject will at once be issued to the public by this department.

I have, &c.,

W. Forster, Esq.

W. J. PAGE.

Enclosure 7 in No. 159.

MESSRS. J. MACKRELL and Co., to the AGENT-GENERAL, New South Wales.

Postal Contracts.

SIR,—

21, Cannon Street, E.C., 19th December, 1876.

With reference to the questions raised by Captain Jopp on Saturday, we beg to point out that no variation of the times of departure of the mails can be made except by the authority of the Postmasters-General, and although the Mail Contractors are bound to wait the arrival of the English mails at San Francisco, if necessary, for a period of seven days, we think they would be entitled to damages against the Postmasters-General if the delay was wilfully occasioned by any arrangement for the mails being delayed in the departure from England without a proper notice being given by the Postmasters-General.

To enable this to be done by yourself and Sir Julius Vogel on behalf of the Postmasters-General, you might each of you cable your Postmasters-General to execute a power of attorney authorizing the giving of such notices as you may think fit for the departure of the mails, and upon receipt of a telegram that such a power had been executed, it might be acted upon without awaiting its arrival in this country.

We have, &c.,

J. MACKRELL AND CO.

Minute by Captain Jopp.

It was pointed out to the Post Office, in Mr. Forster's letter of the 18th instant, that the Agents-General had no power to change the day of departure; but that if the Post Office must abandon the Thursday in January, the Agents-General would be disposed to suggest to the Post Office to make it