

steamers, it would arrive here on Tuesday evening (accidents excepted) in time to sail at noon on Wednesday, always supposing that Wednesday be fixed as the day of departure, giving ample time for rest and refreshment. If, however, the transcontinental journey were accelerated twelve or twenty-four hours, the date of departure might be fixed correspondingly earlier. A delay of two days now occurs. Better give the London correspondents the benefit. A change of Atlantic steamers will effect that object.

The time of departure from Sydney might also be postponed, stipulating for a higher rate of speed, provided always that the mail steamer arrived at San Francisco on Friday evening, and the overland mail leaving here on Saturday morning, arriving in time to catch the steamer from New York, sailing on Saturday. In the ordinary course of post, were this change made, the time would be accelerated, and the colonies and Home country derive the benefit of the time now wasted in San Francisco and New York respectively. Moreover, the through service might be completed in forty or forty-one days. The "Australia's" mail was landed in London in forty-two days from Sydney.

I write in great haste, in the hurry of my own business, and can therefore only indicate what I mean, and what Mr. Dougherty, after years of postal experience, suggests.

To save time in transferring mails from steamer to train, in case of tight fit as to time, I would suggest that instructions be given to the Mail Agent to bring his mail on deck in sufficient time to check it over and prepare way-bills before arrival in harbour. Time would be saved, and confusion and difficulty avoided at all times. But it is imperative that instructions be given to the captains of steamers that they shall place every facility at his disposal—that they shall not put it off, and throw everything to the last minute, which they usually do, on the plea of necessity for working the ship. Moreover, when the mail has been checked on deck, it should be covered, and remain there until passed direct to the railroad train or post office, as the case may be. I have consulted Mr. Cheeseman, your Mail Agent, who recommends this course; also Mr. Dougherty, who declares it absolutely necessary. And my own observation and judgment commend it.

It is necessary that New South Wales should co-operate. It can do so by enclosing all the other Australian mails in Sydney bags, keeping a separate account, and enabling the transfer of mails to be made simply and without delay. Now, Perth, Queensland, &c., have separate mails, with separate way-bills, &c. The New Zealand Mail Agent has to attend to all these, to preserve the reputation of the service for accuracy. Why should not New South Wales take this burden upon itself, as it sends no Mail Agent?

Please bring these points before the Postmaster-General, and communicate with New South Wales Government on the subject. If the Sydney office made up a separate San Francisco and California mail bag, as you do, it would be esteemed a great favour in the post office here. You might suggest this.

Excuse this hasty letter.

W. Gray, Esq., Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

ROBT. J. CREIGHTON.

No. 6.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. CREIGHTON.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 15th December, 1877.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communications of the 5th and 6th ultimo, relative to various matters in connection with the San Francisco Mail Service, and I have to convey to you the thanks of the Postmaster-General for the valuable suggestions put forth in your letters, and to assure you of his appreciation of your efforts to place the service on a more satisfactory footing.

Owing to a pressure of sessional work your communication have not as yet received from the Postmaster-General that consideration which they merit, and I am unable, therefore, to reply in detail by the present mail to the various points brought under notice.

The suggestion relative to the Mail Agent accompanying the train in cases where the mails are specially sent on, to overtake the previous through train, has been brought under the notice of the Mail Agents, who will consult with you in the matter.

I enclose for your information a copy of the San Francisco and Suez time-tables for 1878, from which you will observe that the departures from the colonies are so arranged that the San Francisco and Brindisi routes shall, as nearly as possible, alternate. You will also observe that the departure from London of the mails *via* San Francisco is fixed for Thursday, and from San Francisco for Monday.

A copy of your letter of the 5th ultimo, with enclosures, will be forwarded to Sydney, and the New South Wales Government will be invited to co-operate in effecting the various improvements indicated by you.

R. J. Creighton, Esq.,

Resident Agent for New Zealand, San Francisco.

I have, &c.,

W. GRAY,

Secretary.

No. 7.

Mr. GRAY to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Sydney.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 10th January, 1878.

I have been directed to forward you, for the information of the Postmaster-General of New South Wales, copies of communications recently addressed by Mr. R. J. Creighton, the Resident Agent at San Francisco for this Department, to the Agent-General at London, and to myself.

A perusal of these letters, taken in connection with your communication of the 27th September last (F.—4B., 1877, No. 5), will show that the points raised in your letter have also been receiving consideration at San Francisco; and that the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, as well as the San