

It is evident from Mr. Rea's letter, of which you enclosed a copy, that nothing further can be done in the matter at present, and Mr. Creighton will be so informed; but the question will again be brought up in the event of fresh arrangements for the continuation of the San Francisco service being entered into.

I have, &c.,

T. W. HISLOP

(For Postmaster-General).

Sir F. D. Bell, K.C.M.G., C.B., Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

### No. 57.

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

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 15th March, 1890.

In reference to my letter of the 27th November last, and to your reply of the 27th December last, on the subject of accelerating the San Francisco mail-service, I have now the honour to enclose copy of a letter of the 10th January (with enclosure from the General Post Office, London) which has been received from the Agent-General, and from which it appears that at present no further changes can be made whereby the service would be accelerated. I have so informed Mr. Creighton.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary, General Post Office, Sydney.

W. GRAY, Secretary.

### No. 58.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. R. J. CREIGHTON, San Francisco.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 18th March, 1890.

In reference to my letter of the 29th November last, acknowledging yours of the 18th October, I have now the honour to inform you that a reply has been received from the Agent-General, from which it appears that only the fastest vessels under contract with the Post Office are availed of for the Atlantic transport of the colonial mails outwards *via* San Francisco. The Secretary of the General Post Office, London, writing the Agent-General on the 8th January, says: "You are quite right in supposing that these mails are at present forwarded from England to New York by the fastest steamers under contract with this department—in fact by the best ships of the Cunard line, which generally make the passage across the Atlantic in about seven days. You will remember that the mail-day from London was changed from Wednesday to Saturday, in March, 1888, in order to secure the service of these fast steamers." It seems, therefore, that nothing further can at present be done to expedite the delivery of the mails at San Francisco; but, should it be decided to continue the San Francisco service, the question will again be brought up.

I have, &c.,

R. J. Creighton, Esq.,

W. GRAY, Secretary.

Resident Agent for New Zealand, San Francisco, California.

### No. 59.

Mr. R. J. CREIGHTON to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

SIR,—

San Francisco, 8th April, 1890.

I have the honour to inform you that the British mail for New Zealand and Australia, which was despatched from Liverpool by the "Bothnia" on the 22nd March, did not arrive at New York until the 4th April, thus making the Atlantic passage fourteen days, and causing the detention of the "Alameda" at this port to the 9th instant, her schedule time being the 5th.

I am not informed why the "Bothnia" was selected for this trip, as the "Aurania" had been advertised to sail from Liverpool on the 22nd March, and the United States Post Office notified her intended departure from New York with the English mail on the 5th April. The "Aurania" did not sail, however, and the "Bothnia," the slowest ship of the Cunard fleet, took her place.

This change of steamers may have been unavoidable; but, taken in connection with the fact that despite of repeated protests the British Post Office invariably selects a slow steamship for the last instalment of the colonial mail *via* San Francisco, it is open to comment.

If the change of the day of despatch from London had been made, as suggested in previous letters, instead of the "Alameda" being held at heavy expense to the 9th instant she might have had despatch on the 2nd. If the "Aurania" had been employed the "Alameda" could have sailed on the 5th.

Whatever the cause may have been, the effect is to place the Californian mail-service at a great disadvantage, more especially as the extended contract makes no provision to pay extra for accelerated speed. Moreover, the delay and uncertainty occasioned by the practice of selecting slow Atlantic steamships interferes with passenger-travel, and injures the business interests of the line. Is it not possible, by joint remonstrance with the Government of New South Wales, to put an end to the injurious discrimination against the Californian service by the London Postal authorities.

I have, &c.,

W. Gray, Esq., Secretary, Post and Telegraph, Wellington.

R. J. CREIGHTON.