

States and England. This postal advantage to New Zealand appeared to me to be so great, accompanied as it is by a saving of at least three days on the through time between Sydney and London, that I cabled the 22nd December, in my cable announcing the arrival and departure of the mail at San Francisco, as follows: "Make Sydney sailings Mondays, beginning (instrepto) 26th January, saving three days." Anticipating your approval, I advised the issue of a new time-schedule, copies of which I inclose herewith. I have not had a reply to my cable, but expect to receive one hourly. Messrs. J. D. Spreckels and Brothers have cabled their Sydney agents to advertise Sydney sailings in accordance with this schedule of dates. New South Wales having declined to become a party to the contract for the Californian mail-service, it is not necessary to obtain its consent to this change, or even to consult its Government on the subject. A similar change of sailing dates was objected to by the Sydney Post Office department some years ago, as it desired to make the Californian line alternate with the Suez mail as nearly as possible, but as it has abandoned the American mail-route this reason no longer exists.

It is manifestly the interest of New Zealand to improve and expedite the Californian mail-service as much as possible without incurring extra expenditure, and this can be accomplished, as I have shown, by adopting the new time-schedule issued by the Oceanic Steamship Company, and which has been placed in the hands of their agents and correspondents.

The "Bothnia," with the December mail, made a long Atlantic passage, the last portion of the mail having left New York only on the night of Wednesday the 7th, three days later than usual. This detention can be submitted to, however, inasmuch as it was necessary to change the rotation of the steamers and bring the Australian mail for despatch by a fast ship from and after January.

The Shipping Bill was debated during the week in the House of Representatives. No decision had been reached to-day. Although the division will be a close one, I anticipate the passage of the Bill.

I have, &c.,

ROBT. J. CREIGHTON.

W. Gray, Esq., Secretary, Posts and Telegraphs, Wellington, N.Z.

Enclosure in No. 123.

MR. CREIGHTON to the Hon. N. M. BROOKS.

SIR,—

San Francisco, 27th December, 1890.

I have the honour to inform you that, owing to the substitution of the "Umbria" for the "Aurania" in the carriage of the British-Australian mail from Liverpool to New York during 1891, it has been decided by the New Zealand Government to take advantage of the shorter average Atlantic passage which this change of steamships involves, and fix the day of sailing from San Francisco for Auckland and Sydney for Thursday, instead of Saturday as hitherto. This change in the day of sailing is to take effect on Thursday, the 5th February, 1891, and every twenty-eight days thereafter, in accordance with the new time-schedule, two copies of which are enclosed for your information and use. I have to request, therefore, that you issue the necessary orders for making up the United States mail for Australia and New Zealand for despatch from San Francisco on those days; also, that upon the arrival of the "Umbria" at New York with the closed British mail for the Australian Colonies it will have despatch by the west-bound express the same day, which is usually Saturday.

Strict attention to this connection between steamer and railroad is essential to the shortening of the time between London and Sydney, thereby demonstrating to the merchants of Australia and New Zealand the superiority of the American mail-route for commercial purposes over the Eastern or Suez route. If this can be accomplished it will strengthen American interests in the Colonies and restore confidence in the permanence of the line. I make the stronger point of this because I am informed at the San Francisco Post Office that the "Umbria's" mail arrived at San Francisco on Friday during the present year, with two exceptions: one on Thursday and one on Saturday. But if the "Umbria" arrives at New York on Saturday in time for the transfer of the Australian closed mail to the 9 p.m. or 9.30 p.m. west-bound express, it should arrive at San Francisco about noon of the following Thursday on the present railroad time-schedule. If, however, it were allowed to remain in the New York office until Sunday's express it would not arrive until Friday. This would defeat the purpose of the change in the day of sailing from San Francisco, which is to take advantage of favouring conditions to accelerate the service and display the superiority of the Californian mail-route for the Australian Colonies.

I am satisfied that the New Zealand Government may confidently rely upon the co-operation of the United States Postal Department in this matter, and that, if necessary, general orders shall be issued to insure the direct transfer of the closed British-Australian mail to the west-bound train from the steamer, and thereby prevent a detention of twenty-four hours at New York and a corresponding delay in the delivery of the mail at Auckland and Sydney.

You will note from the accompanying time-schedule that the day of sailing from Sydney has been changed to Monday, beginning Monday, the 26th January, 1891. This will bring the steamer to San Francisco on Thursday, the 19th February. By this change the Australian mail Homeward bound will reach New York on Tuesday, the 24th February, in full time for despatch by the "Majestic," sailing at 7 a.m. on Wednesday, the 25th February, for Queenstown and Liverpool, thereby insuring rapid Atlantic transit and saving two days' detention at New York, which is unavoidable under the old time-schedule, making Saturday the day for arrival at San Francisco. I have also to request your attention to the fact that, owing to failure to make connection at Chicago with the west-bound express, the "Alameda" was delayed twenty-four hours at San Francisco, waiting the arrival of the last portion of the Australian mail by the "Aurania" this month. As passengers by the same train from New York came through on time with their baggage, it would seem that it might