

The New York office has been despatching the Australian mail of domestic origin by the 9 p.m. New York Central train 11, under orders from the department, since 1887, and the advertisements to the public announce that the mails for Australia are closed at 3 p.m., and despatched daily up to and including the day upon which the Australian mails arrive from Great Britain. Hence the action of the New York office in despatching, on 6th January, the mail of domestic origin by a later train than the mail of British origin was in conformity with existing orders and the notices to the public.

When this order was given to the New York office, your office, in accordance with the recommendation of this office, provided that the final despatch of the British Australian mail from New York, west bound, should be made by the 9 p.m. New York Central train. Since that time (1887) complaints of delay have been made from San Francisco, and the orders have been modified by your office, so that the final despatch of the British Australian mail from New York, west bound, is now made either by the 6 p.m., 9 p.m., or 9.10 a.m. New York Central train. Hence, if this mail should arrive at New York from Great Britain early in the morning, in time to connect the 9.10 a.m. train, the mail of domestic origin would not be forwarded westward until twelve hours later, and is therefore subject to any cause of delay that might arise after the British Australian mail has gone west.

The principal reason for the recommendation that was made by this office in 1887, to make the final despatch of this mail by the 9 p.m. train only, was the understanding that the steamer sailed from San Francisco only after the arrival of the British Australian mails, and would not be held for the mail of domestic origin from New York. If this condition still prevails, this office would deem it advisable to renew the old instructions for the despatch of the whole mail by the 9 p.m. train, regardless of the hour of its arrival during the day at New York by steamer, thus revoking the existing orders, which contemplate its despatch by any one of the three trains mentioned—viz., 9.10 a.m., 6 p.m., and 9 p.m. New York Central trains. If, on the other hand, the existing arrangements contemplate holding the steamer at San Francisco until the trans-continental connection arrives, which left New York at 9 p.m., five days earlier, the present arrangement of despatches might continue.

Respectfully,

R. C. JACKSON,
Superintendent, Railway Mail Service.

Hon. James E. White, General Superintendent.

No. 49.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. CREIGHTON.

Post Office and Telegraph Department, General Post Office, Wellington,
21st June, 1892.

SIR,—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 4th ultimo, and to thank you for the copy of correspondence, which you sent therewith, exchanged between Messrs. J. D. Spreckels and Brothers and the United States Post Office, on the subject of the detention of the "Monowai" at San Francisco in January last. I note the action taken.

I have, &c.,

R. J. Creighton, Esq.,
Resident Agent for New Zealand, San Francisco, California.

W. GRAY, Secretary.

CHANGE OF SAILING DATE.

No. 50.

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

SIR,—

San Francisco, 7th January, 1893.

I have the honour to inform you that the Cunard Steamship Company has advised Messrs. Spreckels, general agents of the Oceanic Steamship Company, that commencing April next the British mail from London connecting at San Francisco with the New Zealand and Australian mail-boat will be carried by either the "Etruria" or the "Campania." As these are very fast ships, the agents anticipate that the outward mail will reach this city on a Thursday, and propose to change the day of sailing accordingly, subject to the approval of the Postmaster-General. To meet this contingency a *pro forma* time-table has been prepared, copy of which I enclose. This will be issued in advance to the company's agents, and to Cook and Sons, for their guidance, pending approval.

It is important, in the interest of the service, to have as prompt despatch as possible at this port, and if the outward mail should arrive on Thursday the steamer should sail for the colonies the same day. This arrangement would proportionately shorten the time to Auckland and Sydney; and if the deviation to Apia were not imperative a further saving of a day in transit would be possible.

The "Bothnia," which brought the December mail, made a long passage, but not more so than usual with her. New York despatches show that it should arrive here on Monday, the 9th January, on which date the "Alameda" is advertised to sail. As at present advised, we are not likely to have the "Bothnia" used again as a relief boat for the mail-packet service. The "Urania," which sailed ahead of the "Bothnia" on the Cunard Company's schedule, was six days overdue, having broken a shaft in heavy weather. The "Alameda" had a very bad experience between Auckland and Samoa, as the enclosed newspaper report will show. The needed repairs have been made to the ship. Fortunately the mail was not injured by the water to any appreciable extent.