

further informing me that representations had been made to the London Post Office, through the Agent-General regarding the desirability of the colonial mails being despatched by the fastest steamer of the week. In this connection I would report that the outward mails *ex* "Aurania" passed Chicago yesterday morning, and should arrive at 8.45 p.m. of Thursday. I have therefore requested Messrs. Spreckels and Brothers to hold the "Alameda" in readiness to proceed immediately upon receipt of the mails, and I anticipate her departure at midnight on Thursday.

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

I have, &c.,
H. STEPHENSON SMITH,
Resident Agent.

(No. 17.)

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

SIR,—

San Francisco, 31st March, 1896.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 6th February, 1896, stating that it had been rumoured that the January mails from here did not receive the utmost despatch at New York upon their arrival from Europe. In reply, I would state that from inquiries made I gather that the mails in question did not arrive at the wharf at New York until past 1 p.m. of the 5th of January, and as the fast express leaves promptly to the minute it was impossible to catch the 1 o'clock despatch. I would mention that the railway depot of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad is about one hour's journey from the steamship dock. I shall endeavour to keep you informed of all cases where any delay is caused to the transit of through mails either by land or sea.

W. Gray, Esq.,
Secretary to the General Post Office, Wellington, New Zealand.

I have, &c.,
H. STEPHENSON SMITH,
Resident Agent.

(No. 18.)

The ACTING GENERAL MANAGER, Union Steam Ship Company, Dunedin, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand (Limited),
Dunedin, 1st April, 1896.

SIR,—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your favour of the 19th ultimo, regarding the suggested alteration in the sailing-date of the mail-steamers from San Francisco, and note that the Agent-General has been written to to represent to the London Post Office the disabilities attaching to the use of the slower class of steamers for the conveyance of the colonial mails to New York. A copy of your letter has been forwarded to Messrs. Spreckels for their information.

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

I have, &c.,
T. W. WHITSON,
For Acting General Manager.

(No. 19.)

The ACTING GENERAL MANAGER, Union Steam Ship Company, Dunedin, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand (Limited),
Dunedin, 14th April, 1896.

SIR,—

Referring again to your favour of the 19th ultimo, *re* the possibility of making an alteration in the sailing-day of the mail-steamers from San Francisco, the following remarks made by Messrs. Spreckels in their last letter may be of interest to you: "From what we wrote you under this heading ('Mail-service') by the last mail you will have learned that there does not seem to be any prospect of our being able at present to despatch the steamer earlier than Thursday, and we have again, for the third time in succession, to report the mails a day late, the 'Umbria' having only reached New York on Sunday, which makes it Friday morning before the mails could reach here, and we have just learned that they will not arrive until Friday evening. From this you will see that if the mails continue to come forward by the 'Umbria' there will be little probability of our being able to despatch the steamer even on the present schedule date."

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

Yours, &c.,
T. W. WHITSON,
For Acting General Manager.

(No. 20.)

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the PREMIER.

Westminster Chambers, 13, Victoria Street, London, S.W.,
16th April, 1896.

SIR,—

In accordance with the instructions contained in your letter of the 5th February, I had an interview with the Secretary to the Imperial Post Office, and urged upon him the importance of arranging for the despatch of the San Francisco colonial mails from London to New York by the swiftest steamers.

The Secretary recognised the twofold advantage which would result by the mails reaching New York in as short a time as possible, and promised to at once communicate with Sir John Burns, the Managing Director of the Cunard line, and represent the case to him, and he felt sure that, so far as it could possibly be done, Sir John would endeavour to meet the wishes expressed by the Government.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
W. P. REEVES.