

by outgoing mail about detaining steamers whenever British mails are late in reaching San Francisco. Sir Joseph Ward desires to have power to detain vessels, if necessary, for twenty-four hours at Auckland: first twelve hours free, and after that demurrage of five pounds (£5) an hour.

Amendments to clause 9 agreed to. The substituted clause for draft clause 10 is accepted; but here again we are very much inconvenienced through not knowing the provisions of contract with United States. The amendments to clauses 11, 12, 13, and 16 approved, as well as the addition to clause 21. The Postmaster-General will need to have an undertaking from Messrs. Spreckels to provide suitable accommodation for the sorting of mails on the voyage from San Francisco. This, as you know, has been really agreed to by Mr. Spreckels, but the Department should have a letter in proper legal form, failing any reference being made to the matter in the contract itself. I have no doubt position would be facilitated were you to cable Mr. Spreckels, informing him of extent to which his amendments have been accepted, and of the Postmaster-General's views with respect to detention of vessels at Auckland and San Francisco, as well as to powers for examining vessels. You will probably be writing Mr. Spreckels at length respecting your interview with the Postmaster-General and myself, and I would ask you to emphasize the disadvantage we are placed at through not having copy of the United States contract, or the essence of the agreement, as affecting the downward service and conveyance and custody of the mails. To-morrow is unfortunately government holiday.

No. 65.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to Messrs. HENDERSON and MACFARLANE, Auckland.

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 15th May, 1902.

As you are no doubt aware, "Sonoma's" mail five days late reaching London, and we have just been advised that "Ventura" was day and half late in reaching San Francisco, which will probably mean another four or five days' late delivery in London. The Agent-General is again complaining of irregularities. It is no doubt apparent to you that something must be done to secure greater regularity. I think the matter of sufficient importance for you to cable Messrs. Spreckels, urging them to agree to Friday departure from Auckland, which I understand is strongly supported by Mr. Dunnet and yourself, and not unfavourably entertained by Messrs. Spreckels. You should emphasize the need for this change by letter, and press Messrs. Spreckels to bring into force forthwith. I have no doubt whatever that the Washington Post Office would agree.

The fact that the time-table was fixed by the United States postal authorities was the only reason which at one time Mr. Dunnet could urge against the change of the time-table. Do consider this as a really urgent matter, alike in the interest of the Post Office, the public, and the service itself. Am posting you half a dozen prints of draft contract as revised by Solicitor-General.

No. 66.

Messrs. HENDERSON and MACFARLANE, Auckland, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

(Telegram.)

Auckland, 16th May, 1902.

As suggested, am cabling Spreckels strongly recommending Friday sailing-day for Frisco. You are, of course, aware present quarantine regulations detained "Sonoma" nine hours here, also "Ventura." This means Pago is reached at dark, and, for safety of passengers, steamers probably lie outside till daylight. You will remember the points I raised while in Wellington against enforcement of quarantine on mail-steamers.

No. 67.

The SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington, to the COLONIAL POSTMASTER, Suva.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 21st May, 1902.

I have the honour to refer to the statements which have been rendered by your office, advising of the particulars of mail-matter despatched from Fiji to San Francisco by mail-contract steamers during the quarters ended 30th September and 31st December, 1901, respectively, and to inform you that the contract between this Department and the Union Steam Ship Company for the performance of the San Francisco mail-service terminated in November, 1900. Since the 6th December of that year this Department has had an arrangement with the J. D. Spreckels and Bros. Company, of San Francisco, for the performance of the service. The amounts payable to the company for conveyance of mail-matter from Fiji are computed, as before, on the basis of weight, and now at rates as follows:—

Up to 30th June, 1901, at the former rates (already paid): Letters 12s., books 1s. 6d., newspapers 6d. per pound.

From 1st July to 29th November, 1901: Letters 10s. 5d., books 1s., newspapers 6d. per pound.

From 30th November, 1901: Letters 7s. 6d., books 1s., newspapers 6d. per pound.

I enclose herewith fresh statements of Fiji correspondence despatched by the San Francisco mail-steamers for the September and December quarters; and a statement in respect of the March quarter, 1902, is also attached. You will observe that there is due to this office the sum of £66 10s. 7d.