

No. 61.

The GENERAL MANAGER, Railway Department, Wellington, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

New Zealand Government Railways (Head Office), Wellington, 21st October, 1905.

Forwarding Mails ex Melbourne Steamer by First Express from Invercargill.

(Memorandum.)

THE delaying of the express is not the only difficulty attendant on the later departure from Bluff of the special with the Australian mails. The special from Bluff to Invercargill must cross the 7 a.m. Invercargill to Bluff train at Awarua, and any delay to the latter train entails a corresponding delay to the train leaving Bluff for Invercargill at 8.5 a.m.; and, as this train conveys an important suburban traffic, any irregularity in the running would result in serious dissatisfaction to the general public.

On the special occasion mentioned by you—viz., 29th August—the last of the mails was landed at 7.30 a.m., and had the train been detained for these it could not have left the Bluff before 7.35, and would not have reached Invercargill before 8.10 a.m., and a ten minutes' delay to the mail train from Invercargill would not have sufficed. The detention of the principal passenger trains for a steamer is always liable to disorganize the train services, and the experience of the Department goes to show that if a margin of ten minutes for delays to steamer is allowed it is extremely liable to extend to a much longer period, and that the steamers, knowing the train will wait, take full advantage of the extra time allowed. I regret that, while being desirous of assisting you as far as possible, the circumstances of the case are such as to entirely preclude compliance with your request.

T. RONAYNE, General Manager.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

[P.O. 05/331.]

No. 62.

The Hon. the POSTMASTER-GENERAL to Mr. J. GRAHAM, M.H.R., Nelson.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 15th November, 1905.

I have the honour to refer to your letter of the 16th ultimo, covering one from the secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, Nelson, forwarding copy of a resolution of the Chamber pointing out that the "Mapourika," which left Wellington without waiting for the Nelson portion of the San Francisco mail at the end of August last, was detained for an hour at the outer anchorage at Nelson, and to inform you that, as already stated, the Department was unable to control the sailing of the vessel. The Union Steam Ship Company was asked whether they could hold the steamer, but could not do so, giving as the reason that it would involve the loss of a tide at each port on the West Coast.

I should add that the Department frequently pays small sums in order to arrange for the detention of steamers for Nelson, so that the San Francisco mail for that place may have speedy transmission, and any increased payment in this direction would not be justified, particularly as with the present running of the steamers there can be but a few hours' delay. It should also be pointed out that the existing San Francisco time-table provides for an interval of about two weeks in which to send replies to letters.

John Graham, Esq., M.H.R., Nelson.

I have, &c.,

J. G. WARD, Postmaster-General.

[P.O. 05/2899(2).]

PARCEL MAILS.

No. 63.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, Wellington, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, London.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 2nd July, 1904.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th May last [not printed] on the subject of weighing parcel mails for this colony, and to inform you that the inquiries which have been made render it necessary to raise a question which it is desirable to settle before the present system is altered.

You remark that the information obtained by the process of weighing is of no value to your office, and that the labour has increased concurrently with the growth in the parcel post. As you are aware, under the present system of accounts, this office pays the shipping companies for the conveyance of parcel mails at the rate of 2d. per pound on the net weight of parcels in bulk carried in both directions. Under the old rates of postage this, of course, resulted in an equitable division