

ing. She arrived at Pagopago on the 28th March at 11.16 p.m.; left the next day at 5.31 a.m.; arrived at Honolulu, 5th April, at 12.30 p.m.; continued the voyage the following day at 1.33 a.m.; arriving at San Francisco on the 12th April at 3.45 p.m., after a slow voyage of 19 days 5 hours 34 minutes, the machinery being out of order.

The quarantine authorities would not allow the mails to be sent ashore by tender, and consequently they missed despatch by the 6 p.m. train, being forwarded east next day, the 13th April, at 11 a.m., and arriving at New York in time to connect with the North German Lloyd s.s. "Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse," which sailed on the 17th April at 10 a.m. for Southampton.

Early on the morning of the 18th April San Francisco was visited by a severe earthquake, and, owing to the partial destruction of the water-mains, the Fire Department was unable to cope with the fires which broke out in various parts, and, although many buildings were blown up by dynamite, it was quite impossible to stop the conflagration, and practically the whole of the business quarter and many of the residential parts were entirely swept away. It was amazing to see the way in which the flames passed through the so-called fireproof buildings, and appalling to witness the destruction of a magnificent city.

On Thursday morning, the 19th April, the Oceanic Company gave me notice that, as the repairs which the "Sonoma" was undergoing could not then be completed, owing to the destruction of various parts of machinery which had been prepared for fitting, her departure would be postponed for three weeks. I informed them that the return English mail received at New York by the Cunard s.s. "Umbria" on the 15th April, and forwarded west by the 8.46 a.m. train the same day, was due at Oakland in a few hours' time, and further asked what arrangements were proposed for its delivery at destination. Under the then existing circumstances the discussion was hurried. The risk of bringing the mail across to San Francisco was too great, as the "Sonoma" was going into the stream, so I suggested diverting the mail north and shipping by the "Moana" from Vancouver. I could not find Mr. Stephenson Smith, or any one in authority at the Post Office to consult with, nor could I get a cable message away to New Zealand, and, promptness seeming necessary, I acted accordingly. We had then been working on board for two days, and it was necessary to clear the mail-room at very short notice, get the bags off the hoppers and labelled, collect

and pack up stores sufficient for a possible voyage from Vancouver, prepare a way-bill, so that nothing might go astray in transit without being missed, and get the mails ashore. Then arose the greatest difficulty I had to contend with—the transference of these bags from the Oceanic wharf to the ferry station, about a quarter of a mile away. The "Sonoma" had gone out into the stream; the shed was insecure, and looked as if it might come down at any time. There was also the possibility of fire, as the ruins just across the road were still aglow and sparks flying about in the wind. After anxiously waiting two hours for the promised assistance with regard to a dray or conveyance, and as this was not forthcoming, I moved round and managed to secure a light express, with which we transferred the mails to the ferry in about eight loads.

The United States Railway Mail Service rendered every assistance at Oakland pier, but more especially at Portland and Seattle; at Portland, Oregon, Mr. F. E. Whitney is Chief Clerk, and Mr. R. A. Whiting occupies a similar position at Seattle. At Vancouver, B.C., Mr. F. E. Harrison, Assistant Postmaster, and Mr. J. O. McLeod, Superintendent of the Canadian Railway Mail Service, helped me in many ways, the latter providing a letter-sorting case, table, and set of iron newspaper hoppers, which I have asked the chief officer of the "Moana" to return to Vancouver by the "Aorangi" or first steamer. The Union Steam Ship Company fulfilled all requirements with regard to the mail-room and other fittings on the "Moana," whilst Captain Neville and Mr. Pender, chief officer, did everything possible to aid me throughout the voyage. I found it necessary to incur a little expense with regard to overtime, to the extent of thirty-nine hours, for the sailor employed in the mail-room, and, as the amount, at the rate of 1s. per hour, would be paid by the purser, a claim in this direction will doubtless be made by the Union Steam Ship Company.

The "Moana" left Vancouver on the 28th April at 1.4 a.m.; arrived Victoria, 28th April, 7.25 a.m.; left same day 9.42 a.m.; arrived Honolulu, 5th May, 5.25 a.m.; left same day 12.25 p.m.; arrived Suva, 14th May, 9.46 a.m.; resumed voyage next day 0.32 a.m., arriving Auckland, 18th May, 4.21 a.m., after a voyage of 18 days 23 hours 9 minutes. The mail consisted of 770 bags from all ports.

Acting on cable advice from Mr. Stephenson Smith at Honolulu, I instructed Mr. Willett, whom I had been previously advised would return to New Zealand with me, as second assistant, to proceed to San Francisco by the "Sierra."

Mr. H. R. Hounsell, of Nelson, accompanied me as assistant, and performed his duties thoroughly in a satisfactory manner.

I have, &c.,

D. E. LINDSAT,

Mail Agent.

The Acting-Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

No. 67.

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

(Telegram.)

Oakland, 22nd May, 1906.

"SIERRA" arrived yesterday 1 p.m. What arrangements made Mail Agents 12th July sailing? Telegraph as soon as possible.

No. 68.

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

(Telegram.)

Wellington, 23rd May, 1906.

LINDSAT proceeding Vancouver steamer Honolulu. Arrive San Francisco about beginning of July. Assistant gone forward by Vancouver.