

No reply has yet been received from the Union Steam Ship Company.

I would point out that this Department is really more concerned than either of the companies, as if the steamers do not wait at Onehunga, even for a short time, for the mails by the San Francisco steamer, which may at the moment be already in sight, there would be great delay in having the mails sent forward. Giving a guarantee that carriages would be attached to the special train when the Northern Steamship Company's or the Union Steam Ship Company's steamers are detained for our purposes would, of course, overcome the difficulty. It is quite a reasonable attitude for the former company to assume if it is likely in consequence of detention to get into trouble with its passengers.

THOMAS ROSE, Acting-Secretary.

The General Manager, Railway Department, Wellington.

No. 102.

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

(Telegram.)

Dunedin, 25th June, 1906.

Re outward San Francisco mail: Present daily service between Onehunga and New Plymouth does not afford us much opportunity to alter time-table running, and under ordinary circumstances we shall not have boat available leave Wellington for Onehunga on Saturday, 7th proximo. We can arrange and send "Rotoiti" direct Onehunga Saturday night; or, if you desired give a southern connection, could leave 8 a.m. Sunday on arrival "Mararoa." This would involve cancelling "Rotoiti's" Nelson call and transshipping passengers and cargo, and would also necessitate her returning empty from Onehunga to New Plymouth on Monday to make usual Tuesday night connection. If you think it necessary give this late connection we are prepared make special trip "Rotoiti" as indicated for £120.

No. 103.¹

The CHIEF POSTMASTER, Auckland, to the ACTING-SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

(Memorandum.)

Auckland, 27th July, 1906.

I BEG to forward you herewith a voucher for £15, the amount agreed upon with the Manukau Steamship Company for taking the last inward San Francisco mail on board the "Weka" at Onehunga, and placing it on board the "Ngapuhi" at Manukau Heads on the morning of the 13th instant. The action taken was communicated to you by telegram on that date.

It was only at 9.30 p.m. on the 12th instant that I learnt the "Ngapuhi" was bar-bound, and it was then too late to communicate with you that night as to what should be done. It was expected that the "Ngapuhi" would cross the bar at daylight, and it was calculated that she would arrive at New Plymouth the same evening, and that if a special train were put on the mail would be in Wellington in time for delivery on Saturday. As you know, the "Ngapuhi" did not get away until after 10 o'clock in the morning, but this could not be foreseen. Besides this, the coastal steamers have repeatedly been bar-bound during the present winter, and it was felt that every effort should be made to get away the San Francisco mail by the first opportunity, as the steamer leaving on the following day might have been bar-bound in her turn had the sea risen again.

I regret such a sum should have been expended to so little purpose, seeing the mails would have reached Wellington at the same time had they been despatched by the "Takapuna" on the following day; but I do not see what other course could safely have been pursued under the circumstances.

D. CUMMING.

The Acting-Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

No. 104.

The CHIEF POSTMASTER, Auckland, to the SECRETARY, General Post Office, Wellington.

(Memorandum.)

Auckland, 3rd August, 1906.

I ATTACH hereto a letter, dated the 31st ultimo, from the manager of the Northern Steamship Company concerning the refusal of the branch manager of the Union Steam Ship Company to pay the former's claim for £25 for carrying the inward San Francisco mail from the Manukau to Taranaki on the 12th ultimo.

The circumstances attending the despatch of the mail in question were explained in my memo. of the 27th ultimo. I have no knowledge of the conditions of the contract or agreement under which the Union Steam Ship Company undertakes the distribution of the San Francisco mail, but I have always understood it was the duty of this office to see that the southern portion of it was forwarded by the first steamer. When the mails were put on the "Ngapuhi" on the night of the 12th ultimo it was expected she would cross the bar at daylight, whereas the "Takapuna" was not due to leave Onehunga till 3 o'clock in the afternoon. The contention of the Union Company is that, while they are to draw the regular amount for carrying the mail, we are to pay the Northern Company for actually having performed the service.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

D. CUMMING.