

is landed at Hobart *en route*, it is necessary to start work immediately on arrival. This is greatly to passengers' inconvenience, for, although hydraulics are installed on all our ships, there is still a good deal of noise going on both on deck and below, and the average passenger is unable to sleep. Passengers are also debarred from spending a day ashore in Hobart, as, if the ship sails at 10 a.m., there is hardly time to walk to the town and back again after breakfast, and even a noon sailing means a very restricted stay ashore.

Consideration of these points led us some time ago to instruct that steamers should not be despatched from Melbourne before 3 p.m. on Wednesdays, and from Hobart at 1 p.m. on Fridays, and in view of the foregoing we are loth to go back to early departures. In the case of bad weather, even these hours of departure may entail overtime at the Bluff or possibly working Port Chalmers in lieu of Dunedin at heavy expense to the company, but it seemed to us that it would be advisable to risk this as against damaging the popularity of the Melbourne-Hobart-Bluff tourist route.

I am afraid, therefore, that we cannot hold out any hope of a regular connection with a 6.25 a.m. special train from Bluff on Mondays, for allowance has not only to be made for the time occupied in getting alongside the wharf and discharging the mails, but also for the time occupied by the medical inspection of all on board, which has to be completed before any one is allowed to leave the ship.

I might point out also that the "Mararoa" is the vessel that leaves Lyttelton on Monday nights, and, as she will not be able to wait for the second express, connection with ports north of Christchurch would be unaffected, although an earlier delivery could be obtained at Christchurch and stations south thereof if the connection could be made.

The Secretary, General Post Office, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

C. HOLDSWORTH, General Manager.

[P.O. 08/4050.]

No. 122.

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

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 21st October, 1908.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th instant, with respect to this Department's proposal that your company's steamers be despatched from Melbourne and Hobart at an earlier hour than at present to allow of their reaching Bluff not later than 5 a.m. on Monday, so that close connection might be made with the express at Invercargill when the railway through service to Auckland is inaugurated.

I have to thank you for the very full consideration given the matter. I regret to learn, however, that for the reasons stated in your letter you are unable to hold out any hope of a regular connection being made with the 6.25 a.m. special train from Bluff on Monday. Under the circumstances, this Department does not propose to move further in the matter at present.

I have, &c.,

D. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

The General Manager, Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand (Limited), Dunedin.

[P.O. 08/4050.]

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing, (1,130 copies), £25 12s.

By Authority : JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1909.

Price 1s.]