

The Assistant Secretary to the Post-Office to Mr. *Inman*.

Sir,

General Post-office, 19 April 1858.

With reference to the last paragraph of your letter, dated the 10th instant, relative to complaints being repeatedly made to the Liverpool, New York, and Philadelphia Steam Ship Company that letters specially directed by one of the Company's vessels are kept back and not forwarded by such vessel, I have to acquaint you that I have been in communication with the postmaster of Liverpool on this subject, and he assures me that all letters specially addressed to be sent by one of the vessels in question are forwarded accordingly, if properly prepaid and posted, or received at his office in time to be so sent, and that they are not detained there as stated.

I request you will be good enough to furnish any evidence you can produce in support of your assertion.

W. Inman, Esq., Liverpool, New York, and
Philadelphia Steam Ship Company,
Liverpool.

I am, &c.
(signed) *F. Hill*.

Mr. *Inman* to the Secretary to the Post-Office.

Liverpool, New York, and Philadelphia Steam
Ship Company.

Sir,

Liverpool, 20 April 1858.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 19th instant (No. 9339) with reference to complaints of letters being repeatedly kept back from the steamers of our line, though specially directed to go by them.

I did not mean to state that "prepaid" letters were detained, our great ground of complaint being that letters are detained because not prepaid.

Our line is looked upon by many of the mercantile community as one by which they have the facility of writing as if they were mail steamers, and in consequence of this they cannot understand why letters must be prepaid by one line of steamers, while this is not required by another line of steamers, and the fact of making people prepay the letters which they are not likely to get repaid by the party whom they address is a great bar to correspondence.

I have been informed by our shippers that they receive complaints that letters specially directed by our vessels have been delivered so late by following mail steamers in America, that they have only received their invoices (of goods on board our vessels) after those goods have been landed and deposited in the New York Custom House for the want of particulars which those letters contained.

To show that my assertion (for which I am asked for particulars) is correct, I enclose a voucher for 5*l*. 8*s*. paid by me on the 28th January 1857, to have letters sent forward by the "City of Baltimore," which were specially directed but not prepaid, which, at 8*d*. each letter, shows 151 letters which would have been kept back but for my doing so, and on that occasion the following mail steamer did not deliver her mails in New York till four days after our steamer.

I enclose a further voucher of 10th February 1858 for 1*l*. 10*s*. for postage on letters similarly situated by our steamer, "City of Washington," showing, at 6*d*. each letter, a number of 60 letters, and the following mail steamer, on this occasion did not deliver her letters until five days after the "City of Washington" (at New York).

We paid these amounts to test the complaints made to us, coming both from London and Sheffield, and I believe I am correct in stating that the above number of letters were the Liverpool letters only, and would not include letters detained for want of payment at other post-offices.

The fact of such a number of letters being unpaid shows how the post-office regulations are unknown, and at the same time shows how much inconvenience must have been caused on the other sailings of our steamers where we did not go to the same expense to secure the letters going by our own steamers.

If the Postmaster-General or you will grant me an interview I should gladly avail myself of the opportunity of further explaining this, as also on the subject of the letter of 14th April (No. 318—I).

To the Secretary, General Post-office,
London.

I have, &c.
(signed) *William Inman*.