

EXPRESS-DELIVERY STAMPS.

Express-delivery stamps, which have been current since 1903, were withdrawn from issue on the 15th August. A new stamp of the same denomination (6d.) depicting a modern Post Office delivery van was placed on sale on the 16th August.

DUTY STAMPS.

The replacement of the duty stamps depicting Queen Victoria by stamps bearing the "Arms" design was completed in June. Certain stamps of the higher denominations were overprinted with the value in black to avoid possible confusion with stamps of other denominations.

POSTAGE-DUE STAMPS.

Postage-due stamps in the denominations of $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d., 2d., and 3d. were withdrawn from sale on the 15th August, and replaced on the 16th August by a new set in the same denominations.

OFFICIAL STAMPS.

On the 2nd January, Centennial stamps overprinted "Official" replaced the $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d., and 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. King George VI official stamps and the 2d., 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 3d., 4d., 6d., 9d., and 1s. pictorial official stamps. The Centennial official denominations issued were $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d., 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 2d., 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 3d., 4d., 6d., 9d., and 1s. The 8d. Centennial stamp overprinted "Official" was issued on the 8th March.

POSTAL STATIONERY.

Following the introduction of postal stationery imprinted with the King George VI die, 1d. letter-cards so imprinted were issued during May, 1939, $\frac{1}{2}$ d. post-cards during July, 1939, and 1d. post-cards during March, 1940.

To conform with the increased rates of postage occasioned by the war, commercial envelopes and letter-cards were overprinted 2d. on 1d. and issued in October, 1939. Registered-letter envelopes were overprinted 6d. on 4d. and issued in November, 1939, and $\frac{1}{2}$ d. post-cards overprinted 1d. were issued in February, 1940.

STAMPS FOR THE MANDATED TERRITORY OF WESTERN SAMOA.

A set of four stamps of the denominations 1d., 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., and 7d. was issued for Western Samoa on the 29th August to mark the completion of twenty-five years of New Zealand's control of the Mandated Territory.

The stamps were withdrawn from sale on the 30th November.

CONTROL OF STAMP-PRINTING: ASSUMPTION BY POST OFFICE.

Under the authority of the Adhesive Stamps Act, 1939, the Post Office is responsible for the creation, custody, and disposition of adhesive stamps and for the administration of the regulations authorized to be made under the Act.

The passing of the Act validates the transfer from the Stamp Duties Department to the Post Office of the control of the printing, &c., of adhesive stamps used by the Post Office for postage purposes and by the Stamp Duties Department for revenue purposes, a change which took effect on the 1st August, 1935.

PARCEL-POST CARDBOARD CONTAINERS.

In 1937 the Department commenced to experiment with cardboard containers for the conveyance of fragile parcels. An extensive trial of the cartons proved their entire suitability for the purpose. Owing to their light weight compared with the heavy wicker hampers previously in general use, the cardboard containers are very convenient to handle, and their use is now extended to the parcel-post service throughout the Dominion. Wicker hampers are now used only to a limited extent.

DEAD-LETTER OFFICE.

	1939.	1938.
Letters returned to senders in New Zealand	518,852*	518,570†
Other articles returned to senders in New Zealand	378,294	397,134
Letters returned to other Administrations	52,052‡	49,829§
Other articles returned to other Administrations	50,211	56,313
Letters destroyed (senders unknown and contents of no value)	31,635	32,526
Letters intercepted addressed to persons and firms on prohibited list	103	178

The proportion of undelivered letters to the total number of letters delivered was 0·38 per cent.

* Including 19,084 registered.

† Including 16,696 registered.

‡ Including 646 registered.

§ Including 580 registered.