

SERVICES TO PACIFIC ISLANDS

The air services between Auckland and Fiji, Samoa, the Cook Islands, Tonga, and Norfolk Island were operated regularly throughout the year by planes of the New Zealand National Airways Corporation. By these planes there are flights three times a fortnight to Fiji, weekly to Norfolk Island, and fortnightly to the other Island destinations. Air-mails for Fiji were also conveyed by the direct Auckland-Vancouver service of the British Commonwealth Pacific Airlines which calls at Nadi, Fiji, and on occasions also by Tasman flying-boats Auckland to Sydney to connect with services from Sydney to Fiji.

The weights of air-mails to the places mentioned, despatched during the year ended the 31st March, were as follows: Fiji, 5,312 lb.; Samoa, 1,714 lb.; Cook Islands, 1,369 lb.; Tonga, 654 lb.; and Norfolk Island, 887 lb.

OVERSEAS SURFACE MAILS

Owing to the increasing preference shown by the public for the air-mail, the volume of overseas letter-mail forwarded by surface transport has continued to decline. Surface mails now consist chiefly of commercial papers, newspapers, &c., and parcels.

With the resumption of the "Aorangi" in the Auckland-Vancouver service, and of the "Aorangi," the "Monowai," and the "Wanganella" in the New Zealand-Sydney service, the regularity of overseas mail despatches has been very considerably improved. To North America, however, in the intervals between sailings of the "Aorangi," it has been necessary to rely on cargo vessels plying at irregular intervals to North American Pacific and Atlantic coast ports, and even on occasions to arrange for the reshipment at the Panama Canal of mails from United-Kingdom-bound vessels.

Sailings of passenger and cargo vessels to the United Kingdom have been frequent, and no difficulty has been experienced in disposing of all mails offering.

Regular sea services have been maintained to Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, and the Cook Islands, with frequent sailings to the French Settlements of Oceania (Papeete and Makatea) and to Nauru and Ocean Islands.

GIFT PARCELS FOR UNITED KINGDOM AND EUROPE

The volume of gift parcels for the United Kingdom and Europe, which continued to increase until August last, has decreased since then. In the past few months the falling off in postings has been appreciable.

The number of parcels posted for the year ended the 31st March, 1949, was 1,203,052, weighing 11,954,215 lb., compared with 1,290,195, weighing 12,266,363 lb., for the previous year.

During the year the New Zealand Post Office agreed to a proposal put forward by the British Post Office that food (and soap) parcels which could not be delivered at the original address, or at the alternative address if one was given, be held for three months, and then if not claimed handed over to charitable institutions and needy persons in the United Kingdom. This action is not taken, however, in cases in which the sender has directed that the parcel be returned in the event of non-delivery. Previously all food parcels unclaimed at the original address or at the alternative address if one was given were returned to the senders in New Zealand.

TELEGRAPH SERVICES (INLAND)

During the past year the telegraph service functioned smoothly, and, in general, the time taken in the transmission and delivery of messages showed a steady improvement. In the provincial centres particularly, where staff