

For quick communication, air-mail services continue to benefit the business community and public alike, and it is pleasing to record a considerable growth in the number of letters sent by this means, particularly for overseas. Whereas a few years ago the number of letters posted for surface despatch to overseas destinations greatly outnumbered those posted by air mail, the position to-day is reversed. This is indicative of the growing popularity of the air service, since the quicker transmission provided has greatly facilitated trade and commercial dealings, and has led also to a more frequent exchange of domestic correspondence.

Advantage was taken during the year to effect improvements in mail exchanges and other postal services. Evidence of this is to be found in the increased frequency of despatch of inland air mails, the use of additional road services for mail despatches, the expansion of the rural-mail-delivery service, and the restoration of the night clearance of mail at Auckland.

For the number of letters and other articles posted during the year, see Table No. 3 in the Appendix.

### INLAND AIR MAILS

The total weight of letters carried by air within New Zealand during the twelve months ended the 31st March, 1950, was 345,990 lb. Of this weight approximately half consisted of outgoing or incoming overseas air-mail.

No additional centres were served during the year, but existing frequencies were improved and provision was also made for late afternoon services from Wellington to Christchurch, Blenheim, and Nelson, and from southern centres and Wellington to Auckland.

The number of air parcels carried throughout the year was 91,226.

### INLAND SURFACE MAILS

#### EXTENSION OF FACILITIES

Improvements to existing mail-services continued to be made throughout the year. The restoration of a number of express-train services which were discontinued in past years enabled more frequent exchanges of mails to be arranged in certain cases. Increased use was also made of railway road services, which, in general, provide an excellent means of despatch for letter-mails.

The more bulky parcel and second-class mails (newspapers, printed papers, commercial papers, packets, &c.) are, in general, despatched by rail. Postings have been maintained at a high level throughout the year, and between Auckland and Wellington the space available on passenger and goods express trains has not been sufficient to meet all requirements. As a consequence, regular use has also been necessary of ordinary goods-trains, which frequently take thirty-six or more hours in transit.

The evening clearance of street posting-boxes in the Auckland metropolitan area was restored on the 14th August, 1949. All pre-war clearances have now been resumed, and some have been extended.

New postmen's deliveries were established during the year at Waikanae, Titahi Bay, Trentham Camp, and Takapau. In addition, numerous extensions to existing deliveries, to serve new housing-areas, were made.

#### MAIL-SERVICE CONTRACTS

The contracts for the performance of inland mail-services in the South Island expired on the 30th September, 1949, and were relet during the year for a further term of three years from the 1st October, 1949.