

## RURAL BOXHOLDERS

The rural-delivery system was considerably extended during the year, 56 new deliveries being established and 342 extensions to existing deliveries being arranged.

The number of boxholders on the 31st December, 1949, totalled 51,523, an increase of 4,293 on the figures for the previous year. This is the largest annual increase in the number of boxholders since the inception of the rural-delivery system in 1922.

## MISSING POSTAL PACKETS

During the year 8,192 complaints regarding the non-delivery of postal packets were investigated by the Department. In 4,230 cases, or more than half the total, the articles were traced or accounted for satisfactorily as follows :—

Sender responsible for delay .. .. .	1,192
Addressee responsible for delay .. .. .	1,117
Post Office responsible for delay .. .. .	534
No delay, or responsibility not fixed .. .. .	1,387

In 3,962 cases, representing 0·001 per cent. of the total number of articles posted, the manner of disposal could not be determined.

## POSTAGE-STAMPS

The 1949 Health stamps were placed on sale on the 3rd October and were of the usual two denominations (1d. plus  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 2d. plus 1d.). The design, which depicted a nurse in uniform holding a child, was prepared by Mr. J. Berry, of Wellington. As this was the twenty-first anniversary of the Health stamp issue it was appropriate that the design should feature a nurse as in the case of the first issue. Messrs Harrison and Sons, Ltd., London, printed the stamps by the photogravure process.

The withdrawal date for the issue was to have been the 31st January, 1950, but, in most cases, stocks held at post-offices were exhausted well before that date. The total sales amounted to £113,053. One-third of this sum, plus donations received by the Post Office amounting to £92, has been paid to the New Zealand Federation of Health Camps.

As from the 1st January, 1950, certain stamps and postal stationery of New Zealand and its island dependencies were demonetized. The issues concerned were as follows :—

*New Zealand*

1935 pictorials and any stamp of this series overprinted, together with any postal stationery bearing a stamp of this series.

Air-mail stamps (1935).

Air-mail letter-cards issued for the exclusive use of prisoners of war.

Health stamps from 1937 to 1945, inclusive.

“Coronation” series, issued in 1937, to commemorate the coronation of Their Majesties King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.

“Centennial of New Zealand” series and any stamp of this issue overprinted.

Express Delivery stamp.

Government Life Insurance original issue (1905).

*Island Dependencies*

“Coronation” set overprinted for use in the Cook Islands and Niue.

King George V 1s. denomination for Cook Islands and Niue.

Western Samoa series commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of New Zealand Administration.