

The Australasian agents of the Australian Mail Line offered to arrange for their steamers to call at Wellington or Auckland on the voyage from Sydney to San Francisco, but the offer was not accepted.

Vancouver Service.

A Press telegram from Ottawa stated that the following resolution was carried in the Canadian House of Commons on the 9th July, 1908: "That it is desirable with all convenient speed to take steps to carry into effect the Imperial Conference's decision regarding the 'All-red Route,' and that this House affirms Canada's willingness to assume a fair share of the burden, and hopes that Australia and New Zealand will co-operate with Canada in arranging a definite plan."

The question is receiving the close attention of the New Zealand Government.

The Commonwealth Administration announces that it has agreed to the extension of the present Canadian-Australian mail contract on the existing terms and conditions for one year from the 31st July, 1909.

The Suva office now notifies this Department by cable of the arrival of the inward Vancouver steamer, to permit of detention at Suva of the Union Company's steamer for New Zealand if necessary.

Miscellaneous.

Owing to the Commonwealth now being regarded as a single State under the Rome Postal Union Convention, no charges have been made since the 1st January, 1908, for maritime or territorial transit on mails from New Zealand to any Australian State—*i.e.*, sea transit from Adelaide or Melbourne to Western Australia, and from Melbourne to Tasmania; and land transit through New South Wales or South Australia for mails to Western Australia is free.

INLAND MAILS.

The number of contracts for inland mail-services in operation on the 31st December, 1908, was 687. There were in addition 597 services not under bond.

The sum paid to the Railway Department for the conveyance of mails by ordinary trains was £46,699.

The last rail for the North Island Main Trunk Railway was laid on the 3rd August, 1908, and the first through trip was made on the 7th August, 1908, the train leaving Wellington at 10 p.m., and reaching Auckland at 6.30 p.m. on the 8th; the journey thus occupying 20½ hours. Owing, however, to certain portions of the permanent-way still requiring ballasting, the line was not open for regular service till the 9th November, 1908, when a regular two-days service was inaugurated, the journey being broken at Ohakune. Mails, however, still continued to be despatched between Auckland and Wellington *via* New Plymouth; but on the inauguration of a daily express service on the 14th February, 1909, the Main Trunk route was utilised for the conveyance of mails, as furnishing a quicker and surer despatch. The daily express now leaves Auckland at 9.15 p.m., arriving in Wellington at 4.25 p.m. on the following day; while the Wellington express leaves at 11.45 a.m., and reaches Auckland at 6.58 a.m. of the following day.

A firm performing a city mail contract which had not paid the contract amount to two of its mail-cart drivers was required by the Department to make good the arrears of wages due to the men.

The weight of mail-matter carried between Glade House and Milford Sound at any one time has been limited to 10 lb. This is because the travelling *en route* is possible for foot traffic only.

In July, 1908, several of the mail-services in the Otago, Canterbury, Wairarapa, and Manawatu districts were interrupted owing to floods. In the Otago Central district a heavy fall of snow prevented the mail-coaches from running, and mails in some instances were conveyed by pack-horse.

The Foxton-to-Shannon coach got off the road, and one bag of mail, containing three or four ordinary letters, was lost, but was recovered eight months later, and the letters duly delivered.

The Motueka-Nelson mail-coach missed the approach to Appleby Bridge on the 22nd September, 1908, and was surrounded by the flood-water and abandoned. The mails were subsequently recovered.

The s.s. "Penguin," from Nelson and Picton for Wellington, was totally wrecked near Cape Te Rāwhiti on the 12th February, 1909, with disastrous loss of life. Two Postal officers were immediately despatched to look after the mail, which consisted of twenty-four bags and two hampers. A lineman and a telegraphist were also sent to Oterangi Bay to open a temporary office at the cable-hut there. Owing to the uncertainty as to the exact position of the wreck, there is no hope of recovering the mails.

Owing to fire at the Millerton Coal-mine the mail-services between Granity and the Millerton Brake-head and between Granity and Mine Creek were temporarily discontinued from the 27th February, 1909. Arrangements were made to carry on the Granity-Millerton service by road.

DEAD AND MISSING LETTERS.

The undermentioned articles of value were found in letters opened in the Dead Letter Office, and returned to senders where practicable: 699 post-office orders, £1,400 3s. 7d.; 60 bank drafts, £5,019 9s.; 510 cheques, £3,493 7s. 10½d.; 37 dividend-warrants, £115 12s. 5d.; 13 promissory notes, £294 2s. 4d.; postal notes, £320 7s. 6d.; British postal orders, £56 12s. 6d.; stamps, £46 15s. 1d.; bank-notes, £374 8s. 4d.; gold, £50 10s.; silver and copper, £18 5s. 5½d.; representing a total of £11,189 14s. 1d.

Amongst other things, there were dealt with 5 gold, 12 silver, and 11 metal watches, 19 gold rings, 23 gold and other brooches, 10 greenstone pendants, 11 watch-chains, 11 gold tie-pins, 2 pairs of gold sleeve-links, 1 gold bangle, 1 pair of gold-mounted eye-glasses, 1 pair of carver-rests, 1 greenstone tiki,