

The declared value of parcels despatched to places beyond the Dominion was £39,521, as against £35,190 in 1910.

- Five new letter-carriers' deliveries were established. Deliveries were extended in 23 and increased in frequency in 9 places.

From the 1st July, 1911, the special-messenger and express delivery services were extended to all offices at which there were telegraph message-boys.

The roller obliterating-stamps with movable type used at the Wellington Office for post-marking packets and newspapers have proved satisfactory.

From the 1st July, 1911, the system of insurance of letters was extended to European and other countries if sent *via* London (Suez route only).

From July, 1911, lead sealing was adopted as the standard method of sealing mails of all descriptions for places in New Zealand, Australia, United Kingdom, Germany, and the United States of America.

During the course of alterations at the Lyttelton Post-office a bundle of old letters was discovered. The letters were post-marked April and May, 1889, and it is supposed that some letter-carrier had secreted them to save himself the trouble of making delivery.

In order to avoid delay to mail-matter generally, through the receipt of letters or other articles enclosed in "transparent" envelopes, such envelopes, if the address cannot be easily read, are placed aside during the sorting and dealt with when the work is less pressing. Enclosures in such envelopes folded in such a manner that the address cannot be read are treated as undeliverable for want of a true address, and if enclosed in an envelope with the transparency running across the breadth of the envelope instead of lengthwise are dealt with as prohibited articles.

POSTAGE-STAMPS.

New yellow-coloured 4d. stamps were printed on the 31st January, 1911, and brought into circulation on the 5th January, 1912.

King Edward overprinted stamps for the South Pacific Islands included in New Zealand territory have been issued as follows: Niue (30th November, 1911)— $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 6d., 1s.; Aitutaki (August, 1911)— $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

Stamp-booklets containing eighteen penny stamps and twelve half-penny stamps were issued for sale to the public on the 9th May, 1912. The stamps are printed in small sections bound with sheets of advertisements between the sections in a size handy for carrying in the vest-pocket. The booklets are sold for 2s., no charge being made for the binding.

OCEAN MAIL-SERVICES.

San Francisco Service.

The service established for one year from the 22nd October, 1910, having proved satisfactory, Government decided to extend it for two years, with Wellington as the outward and inward New Zealand port of call. The contractors placed the R.M.S. "Tahiti" in the service from the 16th December, 1911, and extended the service to Sydney from the 8th December, 1911. The new steamer is fitted with all modern improvements, and is capable of steaming eighteen knots an hour. She has 15,407 cubic feet of cool-storage and refrigerator space, in addition to considerable insulated space fore and aft. Her tonnage is 7,585. The dates of departure of the steamers from Wellington have been altered (from 29th March, 1912) so as to allow of a fortnightly alternation with the Vancouver service from Auckland.

The maximum, minimum, and average periods within which the mails were delivered at and from London and Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin by the San Francisco mail-service are given in Table 15.

Vancouver Service.

The Auckland-Suva-Honolulu-Vancouver service commenced with the departure of the "Marama" from Auckland on the 4th August, 1911. The vessels employed have been regularly despatched and the times of transit allowed under the contract have been well maintained.

The maximum, minimum, and average periods within which the mails were delivered at and from London and Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin by the Vancouver mail-service are given in Table 15.

Commencing in August, 1911, with the inauguration of the new mail-service from Auckland *via* Vancouver, the steamers of the San Francisco service made Wellington the port of departure and arrival.

Suez Service.

The P. and O. steamers resumed making calls regularly every four weeks at Auckland during the southern summer.

The s.s. "Warrimoo" which left Wellington on the 3rd November, 1911, was the only vessel which failed to connect with the outward English mail at Sydney.

Payments on Account of the Suez Mail-service during the Year 1911-12.

	£
Payment to Peninsular and Oriental and Orient lines	16,229
Transit-charges across Australia and Europe	7,497
Mail-service to Australia	*15,000
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	38,726

* Includes £4,000 for New Zealand-Australian mails.