

Details of the flights performed during 1931-32 are as under :—

Date.	Route.	Postal Packets carried.		Time occupied in flights.
		Total Number.	Total Weight.	
1931.			lb. oz.	
12th November	Invercargill-Dunedin-Christchurch-Blenheim-Wellington-Palmerston North-New Plymouth-Auckland	6,201	100 4	3.51 a.m. to 5.56 p.m.
13th November	Auckland-New Plymouth-Wanganui-Wellington ..	671	14 9	6.55 a.m. to 12.16 p.m.
10th December	Auckland-Hamilton-Rotorua-Gisborne	3,114	39 14½	9.3 a.m. to 12.24 p.m.
10th December	Gisborne-Rotorua-Hamilton-Auckland	3,448	48 4½	3.23 p.m. to 6.48 p.m.
24th December	Gisborne-Hastings-Palmerston North	3,966	64 2	3.55 a.m. to 7.35 a.m.
24th December	Palmerston North-Wellington-Blenheim-Christchurch-Timaru-Oamaru-Dunedin-Invercargill	9,304*	179 7	7.47 a.m. to 3.55 p.m.
24th December	Wellington-Palmerston North-Wanganui-Hawera-New Plymouth-Auckland	6,108†	159 9½	7.58 a.m. to 1.35 p.m.
24th December 1932.	Palmerston North-Hastings-Gisborne	1,349‡	31 0	9.45 a.m. to 12.20 p.m.
20th January	Wellington-Nelson-Westport-Hokitika	3,950	52 3½	8 a.m. to 12.10 p.m.
20th January	Hokitika-Westport-Nelson-Wellington	4,872	69 9½	2.11 p.m. to 5.28 p.m.
16th March ..	Wellington-Masterton-Pahiatua-Dannevirke ..	3,481	41 3	9.30 a.m. to 11.32 a.m.
16th March ..	Dannevirke-Woodville-Masterton-Wellington ..	3,554§	44 12	2.28 p.m. to 4.5 p.m.
30th April ..	Auckland-Dargaville-Russell-Whangarei-Auckland	4,979	62 12½	11.7 a.m. to 5.5 p.m.

* Includes 2,076 articles, weighing 32½ lb., carried on Gisborne - Palmerston North flight.

† Includes 1,231 articles, weighing 20 lb. 9 oz., carried on Gisborne - Palmerston North flight.

‡ Includes 393 articles, weighing 15 lb. 2 oz., carried on Wellington - Palmerston North flight.

§ Includes 1,097 articles, weighing 12 lb. 10 oz., carried on outward journey.

The flight on the 30th April was performed outside the year under review, but without it the record of this series of flights would be incomplete.

The number of articles carried by the flights cannot be taken as an indication of the use that would be made of regular services, as special flights are used mainly for the conveyance of letters for philatelic purposes.

The Invercargill-Auckland and Auckland-Wellington flights of the 12th and 13th November had their origin in an invitation extended by the Australian Post Office to the New Zealand Post Office to participate in the despatch of correspondence by the specially arranged Sydney-London Christmas air mail. The New Zealand flights were timed to connect with the steamers "Ulimaroa" and "Marama" leaving Auckland and Wellington respectively, on the 13th November for Sydney, these being the latest departures making the necessary connection at Sydney. The total number of articles despatched from New Zealand for conveyance by the mail was 3,153, of a weight of 63 lb. 10 oz. The mail aeroplane, the "Southern Sun," left Sydney on the 20th November and was due to arrive in England on the 3rd December. It was, however, totally wrecked while taking off from Alor Star (Kedah, Malay States) on the 26th November, and the mail did not reach London until the 16th December, being transferred to and covering the remainder of its journey in the relief aeroplane "Southern Star." The return flight was originally scheduled to commence on the 10th December and to arrive in Sydney on the 23rd December. However, owing to the delay on the outward journey and to a further mishap in England, the return flight was not commenced until the 8th January. The New Zealand portion of the mail arrived in Auckland on the 26th January.

Following the success of the flights of the 12th and 13th November and the 10th December, the New Zealand Air League received permission from the Postmaster-General to perform additional flights on Christmas Eve. These flights were so arranged that all mail-matter arrived at its destination in time for delivery that afternoon. The aeroplane travelling south from Palmerston North was timed to start after the arrival of the express train from Auckland and the mail aeroplane from Gisborne and Hastings; the flight north from Wellington commenced after the receipt of the South Island mails by the ferry steamer; and the return journey from Palmerston North to Gisborne was commenced after the arrival of the aeroplane from Wellington.

A factor contributing much to the success of the whole series of flights was that they were the first official air-mail flights over the routes specified. For this reason requests that the correspondence carried be marked officially by means of special rubber stamps giving particulars of the flight concerned and the date the mail was flown were acceded to, except in the case of the flights of the 12th and 13th November and the 10th December, for which there was not time in which to arrange for the special marking. It was, however, possible to arrange for the correspondence despatched from Auckland and Wellington on the 13th November to connect with the Sydney-London Christmas air mail to be specially marked in the manner mentioned.

Correspondence conveyed in New Zealand by the services described required to bear, in addition to ordinary postage, an air-mail fee at the rate of 3d. per ounce per postal packet. This fee, less 7½ per cent. retained by the Department to cover the cost of conveying mails to and from the starting and landing places, was paid to the New Zealand Air League. The air-mail fee for correspondence posted in New Zealand for conveyance by the Sydney-London Christmas air mail was 1s. per ½ oz. in addition to ordinary postage and the New Zealand air fee if conveyed by air in New Zealand.

During the year the number of letters posted in New Zealand to connect with overseas air mails (including the Sydney-London Christmas air mail already described) was 11,438. Excluding the Sydney-London air mail, the number was 8,285; and of this number by far the greater number was forwarded by the Karachi-London Service.