

Two of the three air-mail flights from New Zealand commenced from Ninety-mile Beach, the Post Office terminal being Kaitaia. It is mentioned that, due to its distance from the principal centres of New Zealand, Kaitaia is inconvenient as a commencing or terminal point for trans-Tasman air mails. When departure is made from Kaitaia, at the northern end of New Zealand, connecting mails from most of the principal centres of the Dominion require to be closed so long before the time of departure of the machine that a good portion of the benefit which air transmission affords is lost.

POSTAGE-STAMPS.

NEW SERIES OF PICTORIAL STAMPS.

Following the decision to produce the new series of pictorial postage-stamps by the line-engraved process, a contract was let with Messrs. de la Rue and Co., Ltd., London, for the printing of supplies of all denominations except the 9d., which is being lithographed by Messrs. Waterlow and Sons, Ltd., London. The 9d. denomination, owing to special requirements of design, could not be produced satisfactorily except by lithography.

Proofs of the master dies of all designs were approved and returned to London during the year, the last in February. It is anticipated that the new stamps will arrive in New Zealand towards the end of 1934. As soon as possible after receipt, the full series will be placed on sale simultaneously at all post-offices in the Dominion.

AIR-MAIL STAMPS.

To commemorate the first trans-Tasman air-mail flight, referred to on page 14 of this report, the existing 7d. air-mail stamp was printed in turquoise blue, and overprinted with the words "Trans-Tasman Air Mail 'Faith in Australia.'" The stamp was issued on the 17th January, 1934; and supplies were withdrawn on the 17th February, the day of the flight. The number printed was 180,000. Of this number, 83,078 were sold. The surplus stock was destroyed.

"HEALTH" STAMPS.

The practice of raising money for children's health camps by means of "Health" stamps was continued during the year. A "Health" stamp of the denomination 2d. (1d. for postage, 1d. for health) was placed on sale on the 8th November, and, in accordance with the practice of previous years, withdrawn on the 28th February following. The design, representing "The Path to Health," was the work of Mr. J. Berry, of Wellington. A steel plate to print sixty stamps to a sheet was made by Mr. H. T. Peat, of Wellington, and the stamps were printed by the intaglio process at the Government Printing Office.

The number of stamps sold was 260,883, the gross value being £2,174 0s. 6d., as compared with a gross return of £1,974 4s. the previous year. The amount made available to the Health Department for health-camp purposes was £921 9s. 7d. The increase in the number of stamps sold, 10·12 per cent. over the previous year, is a satisfactory indication that the scheme is gaining ground in New Zealand.

OFFICIAL STAMPS.

The 5s. denomination of the New Zealand Coat-of-Arms series of stamp-duty stamps was overprinted "Official" in April, 1933.

POSTAL UNION STATISTICS.

Under international postal law each country retains the revenue received from the sale of postage-stamps in its territory, but is responsible for the cost of forwarding its mails to destinations overseas. In many cases transits through other countries and beyond are concerned, and statistics to form the basis for calculating the amounts payable for these transits were taken during the year in all countries of the union. In New Zealand this imposed an appreciable amount of extra work at the principal overseas ports of Auckland and Wellington. Such statistics are taken every three years over a period, in the case of New Zealand, of twenty-eight days, and serve as a basis of settlement for the year preceding and the year following, as well as for the year of taking of the statistics.

A simplified system of taking the statistics was employed on this occasion in accordance with a decision taken at the Postal Congress of London in 1929. Previously, it was necessary to calculate to the nearest kilogram the weight of each bag of mail, and to enter the total weight of the mail on the letter-bill. The procedure now is to divide the bags into three categories—light bags (2 kg. to 5 kg.), medium bags (5 kg. to 15 kg.), heavy bags (15 kg. to 30 kg.), and merely to note on the letter-bill the number in each category. Under the new system, the work is a good deal reduced.

The principal countries to which New Zealand requires to make payment for the onward transit of mails are Canada and the United States of America (for transit across America and beyond of European mails) and Australia (for transit across Australia and beyond of mails for the East, &c.).

The above remarks apply to the international transit of all mails except air mails and parcel mails. In respect of overseas air mails and parcel mails, special accounting systems are in vogue.