

## PRISONER-OF-WAR CORRESPONDENCE

*Outward.*—All mails from New Zealand for prisoners of war in Europe were exchanged through the United Kingdom. Air letter-cards and ordinary air-mail letters were given air transit throughout to London, but parcels and ordinary letters were sent by surface means. From the United Kingdom air-mails for prisoners were disposed of through Sweden, while surface mails were forwarded via France and Switzerland. Owing to the confusion that existed in Germany prior to the end of hostilities, with the consequent improbability of delivery to the addressees, parcels addressed to prisoners of war in that country were not accepted by the Post Office after the 26th March.

A special air-mail post-card has been made available by the Post Office for communicating with prisoners of war and civilian internees in Japanese hands, and supplies are obtainable at principal post-offices. The postage rate is 6d. a card. Although these cards are flown from New Zealand as far as circumstances permit, long transmission times must necessarily be expected, owing to the long and roundabout surface journey that is entailed, especially on the latter part of the route.

*Inward.*—Letters from prisoners of war in Europe arrived in New Zealand fairly regularly, those prepaid at air-mail rates and sent via the United Kingdom being given air transmission to New Zealand, but surface letters arrived in New Zealand by a variety of routes, mainly via North America. Mails from prisoners of war in Japanese hands are received very infrequently, and it is apparent, too, that they suffer considerable delay in transit.

## INTERRUPTION TO INLAND MAIL-SERVICES

On the 18th January, 1945, a railway strike occurred in the Westport district, later spreading to other parts of the West Coast of the South Island, and also to the Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, and parts of the Gisborne and Taranaki districts. During the period of the railway stoppage, emergency mail-services were organized, full use being made of departmental and Army motor-vehicles and existing road and steamer services. In addition, the Royal New Zealand Air Force made planes available for the carriage of letter-mails between the more important towns in the North Island affected by the strike.

Serious floods which occurred in the Canterbury, South Canterbury, and Otago districts in February resulted in the disorganization of mail-services by rail and road in those districts. The R.N.Z.A.F. again provided an emergency air service for the despatch of letter-mails between Christchurch, Oamaru, and Dunedin.

## POSTAGE-STAMPS

The 1½d. stamps of the Centennial issue were overprinted "Tenpence" and placed on sale on the 1st May, 1944.

Health stamps of two denominations—3d. and 1½d.—depicting Their Royal Highnesses Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret Rose, were placed on sale on the 9th October, 1944, and withdrawn from sale on the 28th February, 1945. The stamps were designed and printed by Messrs Bradbury, Wilkinson, and Co. Ltd., New Malden, Surrey, England.

Stamps to the value of £64,428 were sold, and one-third of that amount, representing the health value, together with donations amounting to £6,925 collected by the Post Office, was paid to the New Zealand Federation of Health Camps.

## MONEY-ORDERS, POSTAL NOTES, AND BRITISH POSTAL ORDERS

Money-orders issued, postal notes sold, and British postal orders sold and paid during the year were as follows:—

	Number.	Value. £
Money-orders .. .. .	762,179	5,989,368
Postal notes .. .. .	2,223,041	951,988
British postal orders sold .. .. .	24,915	8,959
British postal orders paid .. .. .	41,448	35,329

## SAVINGS-BANK

During the year deposits lodged in the Post Office Savings-bank amounted to £51,585,120 and withdrawals to £42,158,656, an excess of deposits over withdrawals of £12,426,464. The amount at the credit of depositors at the close of the year was £113,492,290, the interest accruing to depositors being £2,451,628.

## WORK PERFORMED FOR OTHER DEPARTMENTS

A total of approximately £156,000,000 was handled by the Post Office during the year on behalf of other Departments.

The amount of Social Security Charge and National Security Tax collected by the Department totalled £22,321,676.

## MILITARY ALLOTMENT WARRANTS

The number of military allotments and dependants' allowance warrants paid by the Department during the year was 1,634,588.

## TELEGRAPH SERVICES

## TELEGRAPH TRAFFIC

Telegraph traffic continued at a high level. Compared with the previous year the volume increased by 20,588 messages (0.28 per cent.) and the revenue by £28,405 (5.39 per cent.).