

San Francisco and Vancouver. Initially, on account of the fact that mails for the United States forwarded by this service were not permitted to be landed at San Francisco, such mails had to be carried on to Vancouver. Subsequently, however, this disability was remedied. The postage-rate fixed for correspondence forwarded by this service was 2s. 6d. a half-ounce.

From the 1st January, 1947, as a result of a substantial reduction made in the transport charge for mails conveyed by the Pan-American Pacific service, the postage-rate on air-mail correspondence forwarded by that service was reduced from 4s. to 2s. a half-ounce. From the same date the postage-rate on air-mail correspondence forwarded by the Australian National Airways Pacific service was reduced from 2s. 6d. to 2s. a half-ounce.

Early in February the weekly Pan-American service, which, up to that date, had terminated at Auckland, was extended from Fiji to Sydney via Noumea. This resulted in the weekly direct service to New Zealand being reduced in frequency to one trip in each four weeks. This schedule was observed until the middle of March, when the direct service to New Zealand was increased to fortnightly. During the weeks when there was no direct service from New Zealand air mails for North America were forwarded either via Sydney or via Fiji to connect with the P.A.A. service Sydney to San Francisco.

An increase in frequency from fortnightly to weekly of the Australian National Airways service from Sydney to Vancouver took effect on the 12th February. Thus by using in addition the P.A.A. services—either direct from New Zealand or from Australia—the New Zealand Post Office was enabled to maintain a regular and frequent exchange of air mails with North America. At the end of March at least two despatches were being forwarded each week to the United States and Canada.

#### SERVICES TO PACIFIC ISLANDS

The regular air services operated by the R.N.Z.A.F. between Auckland and Fiji, Samoa, Cook Islands, Tonga, and Norfolk Island continued to operate satisfactorily throughout the year and the quantity of mail-matter conveyed—at first small—has shown a substantial increase from month to month. For the year ended the 31st March the weights of air mails despatched to the places mentioned were as under :—

Fiji, 5,648 lb. ; Samoa, 1,370 lb. ; Cook Islands, 793 lb. ; Tonga, 325 lb. ; and Norfolk Island, 744 lb.

Two flights were made during the year—one in January and one in February—to Bora Bora, in the French Settlements of Oceania. On both occasions mails were despatched to the Settlements.

Opportunity was also taken to forward mails to the Chatham Islands by flying-boats, which visited the islands in October, 1946, and January, 1947.

#### OVERSEAS SURFACE MAILS

The position in regard to the despatch and receipt of overseas surface mails has shown an improvement. To the United Kingdom and Europe a reasonably good service has been maintained, though it has been affected to some extent by irregular sailings. The absence during the year of regular sailings of passenger-vessels to the Pacific coast of North America necessitated the use of cargo-vessels, the sailings of which also were far from regular, and to overcome the difficulties in this regard it was necessary on several occasions to despatch mails for trans-shipment at the Canal Zone or to forward them by vessels calling at ports on the east coast of North America.

The exchange of surface mails with Australia, and with places in the East and Africa served via Australia, has improved substantially. Although cargo-vessels are still largely used for mails to these parts the frequency of sailings has improved to such an extent that a reasonable service is now provided. With the "Wahine" operating a