

regular fortnightly service between Wellington and Sydney since February and cargo-vessels also making frequent sailings, the mail-service to and from Australia can now be regarded as almost normal.

In the Pacific regular services have been maintained with Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, and the Cook Islands, while with the French Settlements of Oceania a frequent though irregular service has been provided by using phosphate-vessels trading to and from Makatea.

### GIFT PARCELS FOR UNITED KINGDOM AND EUROPE

In October, 1946, following representations made by Government, the British authorities agreed to lift the restrictions that for some years had been imposed on the receipt of gift parcels by civilians in the United Kingdom.

The lifting of the restrictions enabled senders to forward, without limitation as regards contents or frequency, parcels weighing up to a maximum of 22 lb. At the same time the restrictions that had applied in respect of gift parcels for Europe were also lifted, except that the weight limit of any one parcel was fixed at 11 lb.

The number of gift parcels for overseas posted during the year ended the 31st March was 1,015,435, of a total weight of 7,251,412 lb. With the full co-operation of the shipping companies, this large volume of parcel traffic has been cleared with a minimum of delay. Unfortunately, on a few occasions, due to the protracted voyages of the conveying vessels, shipments of parcels suffered some delay in delivery.

### RESTORATION OF POSTAL SERVICES TO LIBERATED AND EX-ENEMY COUNTRIES

The year under review has seen the gradual restoration of postal services to liberated and ex-enemy countries, and normal postal facilities are now available to almost all overseas countries with the exception of Japan, Korea, French Indo-China, Portuguese Timor, and the Dodecanese Islands. To a few countries—ex-enemy countries in particular—parcel-services, although again in operation, are still restricted to the transmission of gift parcels containing food, clothing, and medicinal supplies. Certain supplementary postal services—for example, the “small packet” service, the insurance of letters and parcels, and the forwarding of duty-prepaid parcels—still await restoration to some countries.

### MISSING POSTAL PACKETS

During the year 7,472 complaints concerning the non-delivery of postal packets were received by the Department. In 3,954 cases, or more than half the total, the articles were traced or accounted for satisfactorily as follows:—

Sender responsible	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,173
Addressee responsible	..	..	..	..	..	..	987
Post Office responsible for delay or loss	..	..	..	..	..	..	389
Responsibility not fixed	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,405

In 3,518 cases, representing 0·00125 per cent. of the total number of articles posted during the year, the manner of the disposal of the postal packets could not be determined.

### POSTAGE-STAMPS

The ½d. Centennial (ordinary and official) stamps and the 1½d. Centennial stamp overprinted “Tenpence” were withdrawn from sale on the 31st May, 1946. The ½d. Centennial official stamp was replaced by the ¾d. King George VI stamp similarly overprinted. The 10d. denomination was not replaced.

Four denominations of the New Zealand Peace stamps—namely, 1d., 2d., 6d., and 8d.—were suitably overprinted for use in the Islands Territories—Niue, Cook Islands, and Western Samoa. These stamps were placed on sale on the 4th June, 1946.