

On 30th September, 1914, and 13th June, 1913, respectively, the 2s. and 5s. official stamps of the pictorial series were withdrawn from issue in the Dominion and replaced by fiscal stamps of those values, bearing the effigy of the late Queen Victoria.

#### OCEAN MAIL-SERVICES.

##### *San Francisco Service.*

At the outbreak of the war the contractors had to withdraw two vessels from and to re-arrange this service. It was subsequently ascertained that the scheduled time-table could not be maintained, and the contractors were given permission to put forward the sailing-dates of the San Francisco vessels six days and the Vancouver vessels ten days, with the result that instead of a regular alternating fortnightly service there are intervals of nine and nineteen days between the trans-Pacific sailings from New Zealand ports.

The R.M.S. "Marama," on her outward-bound trip, commenced on the 7th January, 1915, ran ashore at Point Montara, about fifteen miles south of San Francisco, on the 27th idem, necessitating extensive repairs. The mails which would have been despatched by the "Marama" were diverted to Vancouver, and were forwarded thence by the R.M.S. "Niagara" on the 17th February, arriving in the Dominion on the 7th March. This mail, comprising 1,723 bags, constitutes the largest mail ever received in New Zealand by any one vessel.

##### *Vancouver Service.*

In September, 1914, the R.M.S. "Marama" was withdrawn from the Vancouver service, which has since been carried out by the R.M.S. "Niagara" and R.M.S. "Makura." By "speeding up" these two vessels the time-table has been fairly well maintained.

Owing to a mishap to the machinery the R.M.S. "Niagara," due to leave Auckland for Vancouver on the 23rd March, 1915, did not sail until the 26th March. She arrived at Vancouver on the 10th April, only two days late.

##### *Suez Service.*

Towards the end of 1914, owing to the European war, outward mails, instead of being sent overland from Brindisi or Naples, were conveyed the whole distance from Adelaide to Plymouth by sea, thus adding six or seven days to the time formerly taken. The inward mails are also sent by sea. Owing to the increased time occupied, outward correspondence other than that specially addressed has not been sent via Suez, but has been forwarded via San Francisco or Vancouver. The overland transit, it is understood, will be resumed from the 11th June, 1915.

##### *Payments on Account of the Suez Mail-service during the Year 1914-15.*

	£
Payment to Peninsular and Oriental and Orient lines	6,288
Transit-charges across Australia and Europe	6,232
Mail-service to Australia	14,423*
	£26,943

##### *Direct Service.*

When the parcel mail ex "Corinthic" was received at Wellington on the 27th January, 1915, it was found that the contents of one of the bags had been pilfered. The culprit was sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour for eighteen months.

##### *Panama Route.*

The Panama Canal was informally opened on the 15th August, 1914, by the passage through it of the United States War Department's steamship "Ancon."

In April, 1915, the Department arranged to receive by cable a report of the passage of all New-Zealand-bound vessels through the canal.

#### INLAND MAILS.

Owing to the extensive floods in the Gisborne district during May, 1914, all the important mail-services with the exception of the Gisborne-Tokomaru Bay service were temporarily suspended. In many instances the train services were replaced by coach services.

Four bags of mails were lost in the wreck of the s.s. "Kairaki" off Greymouth on the 27th September, 1914.

Motor conveyances have been substituted for horse coaches on the Waitara-Awakino, New Plymouth-Opunake, and Inglewood-Purangi mail routes. The St. Andrew's-Bluecliffs mail-service has been converted from a "trap" to a "motor-van" service.

#### DEAD AND MISSING LETTERS.

Seven thousand and thirty-four inquiries for postal packets alleged to have been posted and not delivered were made during 1914. In 4,048 of the inquiries, over one-half of the total

\* Includes £3,846 for New Zealand-Australian mails.