

There were 3,930 packets (other than parcels) dealt with in the Dead Letter Office during 1924. In these cases, by means of tracing-notice, special effort was made to find the senders or addressees. 246 letters from overseas bearing insufficient or wrong addresses were specially dealt with, and a large proportion was delivered.

During the year an auction sale of unclaimed packets and parcels was held, at which 148 bundles of miscellaneous articles and 133 packets of jewellery were sold.

The number of "special request" letters returned unopened to senders shows a decrease. If business people realized that a special request for return in the event of non-delivery, printed on an envelope, meant a quicker return of a letter, more would avail themselves of the system.

PROHIBITED POSTAL PACKETS.

During the year 2,214 letters addressed to persons or firms the transmission of correspondence for whom is prohibited under section 28 of the Post and Telegraph Act, 1908, were intercepted and forwarded to the Dead Letter Office.

REGISTER OF NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES.

Forty-three newspapers were registered for transmission by post, and sixteen were removed from the register. Three magazines were registered, and twelve were removed from the register.

The number of registered newspapers on the 31st March was 296, and the number of registered magazines 336.

POSTAGE-STAMPS.

Up to the 31st December, 1924, New Zealand postage-stamps overprinted for use in Aitutaki, Niue, Penryhn Island, Rarotonga, and Western Samoa had been on sale concurrently with the special pictorial series of stamps issued exclusively for use in the various Islands and Samoa. On the date mentioned, however, all Island and Samoan stamps were withdrawn from sale, except the several special pictorial series, the New Zealand 2½d. stamp overprinted for use in Aitutaki, Niue, and Penryhn, the 2½d. and 4d. stamps overprinted for use in Rarotonga, and overprinted stamps of denominations higher than 1s. This means that of each denomination of stamps now on sale in respect of the islands named there is only one series. It is proposed to bring the Island stamps further into line by adding a 2½d. denomination to each series of the Island pictorial stamps and a 4d. denomination, in addition, to the Rarotongan series; the corresponding New Zealand overprinted stamps to be withdrawn when the new stamps are issued. When these changes are effected each Island and Western Samoa will have only its own particular series of stamps of denominations ranging from ½d. to 1s., inclusive.

The stamps of the Island pictorial series issued up to December, 1924, were of the original stocks printed in England. In that month, however, the stock of the 1d. Rarotongan stamp became exhausted, and it was necessary to issue supplies of that stamp from a stock printed in New Zealand. As other denominations of Island pictorial stamps become exhausted they also will be reprinted in New Zealand.

To meet more effectively the requirements of present postage and telegraph rates, "Official" stamps of the denominations of 2d. and 8d. were withdrawn at the 31st March, 1925, and the denominations of 4d. and 9d. substituted.

In July, 1924, a new post-card bearing the ½d. stamp of the King George series was issued; and the stocks of certain issues of post-cards and letter-cards which had been rendered obsolete by reductions in postage-rates were reissued impressed with a lower rate of postage, as follows: The post-card bearing the 1½d. King George stamp overprinted "1d." was reissued with the original stamp and overprint cancelled and the ½d. King George stamp printed alongside the cancelled stamp; and the letter-card bearing the 2d. King George stamp overprinted "1½d." was reissued with the original stamp and overprint cancelled and the 1d. "map" stamp of the Dominion printed alongside the cancelled stamp.

In connection with the forthcoming Dunedin and South Seas Exhibition it has been decided to issue a commemorative series, the denominations to be ½d., 1d., and 4d.

PARCEL-POST.

INSURED-PARCEL POST TO THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

The Department was successful in its negotiations with the Post Office of the Commonwealth of Australia for the introduction into the New Zealand - Australia parcel-post service of a system of insurance for parcels. Under the system, which was introduced on the 1st March, 1925, the maximum amount for which any one parcel may be insured is £50.

CUSTOMS PARCELS.

The following table shows the declared value of goods received by parcel-post from abroad and the Customs duty thereon; also the declared value of goods despatched by parcel-post. The figures for the years 1924 and 1923 are shown in each case:—

	1924.			1923.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Declared value of received parcels ..	1,333,745	0	0	1,343,726	0	0
Customs duty	277,467	16	7	307,022	6	3
Declared value of forwarded parcels ..	75,572	0	0	73,793	0	0