

nine were lost. The second-class matter which was lost comprised 330 bags, of which forty-one were parcel receptacles. One bag of parcels was saved.

The "Ventura" was bound for San Francisco, and the salvaged mails were sent on by her, arriving in London on due date. The Mail Agents returned to New Zealand by the "Tofua" after transferring at Pago Pago.

For the sixty hours which elapsed from the time of the mishap to the "Tabiti" to the transfer of the passengers and letter mails to the "Ventura" the Mail Agents, in common with the ship's complement, were without sleep; and the strain on them was considerable. From the outset they assisted in the emergency work that was continuously necessary to keep the ship afloat until succour arrived.

The devotion to duty under very trying conditions of the Mail Agents was in accordance with the highest ideals of the Service. The assistance rendered them by the master, ship's officers, and crew is also worthy of special comment. The Mail Agents' efforts would have been of little avail without the substantial assistance of members of the ship's complement. This will be appreciated all the more when it is mentioned that the letter mails comprised 27 tons, ship's measurement, and that they and the second-class matter required to be brought to the deck by manual labour.

#### AIR MAILS.

Towards the end of 1930 Government invited tenders for the conveyance of mails by air once daily each way between Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin. It was proposed to make a surcharge of 3d. an ounce for all mail carried, and one of the conditions was that, subject to a 7½-per-cent. deduction to cover Post Office expenses, the successful tenderer should accept payment at the rate mentioned for conveying mails. None of the tenders received complied with the conditions, and the proposal to establish the service was accordingly abandoned. The service would no doubt have been of some benefit to the business community; but it was not expected that it would be availed of regularly to any appreciable extent, in view of the quick and regular night mail-services already operating between Auckland and Wellington and Wellington and Christchurch.

From the 1st July, 1930, the date on which the Air Mail Convention of London came into force, arrangements were made for the acceptance of letters for transmission by the Karachi-London air service and by air mail-services traversing Australia, Canada, and the United States of America. The time saved by the use of the Karachi-London service in the transmission of correspondence posted in New Zealand between the fortnightly sailings of the San Francisco and Vancouver contract mail-steamers is from one to ten days according to steamer connections made in Australia, and also according to whether the winter or summer time-table is operating between Karachi and London. The use of Canadian and United States air services results in a saving of from one to two days, while in the case of Australia a saving of up to seven days, according to destination, may result from the use of air mail-services.

For the period 1st July, 1930, to 31st March, 1931, the number of letters posted in New Zealand to connect with overseas air mail-services was 8,043. By far the greater number of these letters was forwarded by the Karachi-London service.

#### POSTAGE-STAMPS.

The postage-stamps issued during the year comprised the "Charity" stamp (the report in connection with which appears on the following page) and a 2d. "Official" stamp. The latter was reintroduced during March, following the increase of the minimum letter-postage to 2d.

*Proposed Issue of Series of Pictorial Stamps.*—Competitive designs have been invited for a new issue of postage and revenue stamps for the Dominion. The designs are to be representative of characteristic or notable New Zealand scenery or genre, or industrial, agricultural, or pastoral scenes; and the values will be in approximately fifteen denominations ranging from ½d. to 3s. The closing-date for the receipt of designs is the 30th September, 1931. A special Board, on which there will be representatives of art as well as of the Government Departments concerned, will be set up to adjudicate on the merits of the designs submitted, and a prize of £25 will be paid for each design that is adopted for a stamp of the new series.

*Air-mail Stamps.*—The issue of a series of air-mail stamps comprising the denominations 3d., 4d., and 7d. has also been approved. The plates for the stamps are being manufactured in England.

#### POSTAL STATIONERY.

The cost to the Department of the post-card and letter-card paper and printing was about £1,700 a year. As it was considered that there was no sound reason why the cost of the articles should be borne by the Department, it was decided to make an addition to the selling-price, hitherto the postage value, to cover the cost of production. Accordingly, from the 2nd February, 1931, the following charges were introduced:—

1d. letter-cards, 2d. for 10 (in addition to postage value).

½d. post-cards, ½d. for 8, or 6d. for 100 (in addition to postage value).

The selling-prices of other articles of postal stationery already included an amount to cover the cost of production.