

A further illustration of the suitability of aircraft for mail-carrying purposes in cases of emergency was afforded on the 21st February, when a number of machines returning from Invercargill was made use of for the conveyance of mails from Dunedin and Oamaru to Christchurch, the rail and road routes having been interrupted by floods between Pareora and Otaio.

POSTAGE-STAMPS.

PROPOSED ISSUE OF SERIES OF NEW ZEALAND PICTORIAL STAMPS.

The competition conducted during the year with the object of obtaining designs for a new series of pictorial postage-stamps for New Zealand drew 1,569 designs from 234 competitors situated in various parts of the Empire, the majority resident in New Zealand. The difficult task of adjudicating upon the merits of the designs was entrusted to a Board comprising the Hon. Sir R. Heaton Rhodes, K.C.V.O., K.B.E. (Chairman), Mr. Richard Wallwork, A.R.C.A., Director, School of Art, Canterbury College, Mr. Johannes C. Andersen, F.N.Z.Inst., Librarian, Turnbull Library (expert in Maori art), and Mr. G. McNamara, Secretary of the Department. The Board met in Wellington on the 20th and 21st October, and, after an exhaustive examination of all designs received, recommended the acceptance of the following, which recommendation was approved :—

Denomination for which design selected.	Description of Design.	Designer.
½d.	Fantail in a setting of clematis	James Fitzgerald, Christchurch.
1d.	Kiwi	C. H. and R. J. G. Collins, Christchurch.
1½d.	Maori maiden cooking food	M. Matthews, Wellington.
2d.	Maori whare	H. W. Young, Auckland.
2½d.	Mount Cook with border of mountain lilies	L. C. Mitchell, Wellington.
3d.	Head of Maori girl	L. C. Mitchell, Wellington.
4d.	Mitre Peak	James Fitzgerald, Christchurch.
5d.	Swordfish	R. E. Tripe and W. J. Cooch, Wellington.
6d.	Harvesting scene	T. I. Archer, India.
8d.	Tuatara	L. C. Mitchell, Wellington.
9d.	Maori ornament and decoration	I. F. Calder, Wellington.
1s.	Droving scene	Marcus King, Wellington.
2s.	Landing of Captain Cook	T. H. Jenkin, A.R.C.A., Invercargill.
3s.	Mount Egmont	L. C. Mitchell, Wellington.

In accordance with the conditions, a prize of £25 was paid for each accepted design.

The selected designs cover almost as wide a range of subjects typical of the Dominion as is permitted by the comparatively restricted limits of a series of postage-stamps. They include representations of New Zealand bird and animal life, notable scenic features, Maori art and primary industries, as well as recording an important event in the history of New Zealand, and picturizing a happening connected with a sport which is attracting many visitors from overseas. In the majority of cases, the subjects represented are characteristic of the Dominion alone; and it is confidently anticipated that, when issued, the stamps will very attractively advertise New Zealand.

In order that the new stamps may be of a high standard of production, the selected designs have been forwarded to England, where tenders have been invited for the supply of the necessary printing plates. It is proposed that the stamps be produced by what is known as the "photogravure" process, a process of stamp-production which has been adopted with marked success in recent years by many countries. Machines for the production of stamps by this process are not at present available in New Zealand, and so that the issue of the new stamps may not be delayed unnecessarily, it is proposed to have an initial supply of each denomination printed in England. Thereafter, supplies will be printed in New Zealand with machinery that it is intended as soon as possible to provide. It is expected that the new stamps will be available for issue early in 1933.

STAMPS OF THE COOK ISLANDS AND NIUE.

A recent happening of importance was the issue of two new series of stamps, one for the Cook Islands and one for the Island of Niue. The designs of the stamps in each of the new series are the same, except for the necessary variations in the Island names and consequential alterations in the borders. Furthermore, the colours of the stamps are different in each series. The denominations of the stamps in both series and the central feature of the design of each are as under :—

½d.	..	Landing of Captain Cook in the Cook Islands.
1d.	..	Portrait of Captain Cook with Naval head-dress.
2d.	..	Double Maori canoe, representing the early arrival of the Maoris in New Zealand from the Cook Islands.
2½d.	..	Natives working cargo between the shore and a schooner.
4d.	..	Avarua Harbour, Rarotonga.
6d.	..	R.M.S. "Monowai" at Rarotonga.
1s.	..	Portrait of His Majesty King George V.

All except the 1s. denomination in each series were issued on the 15th March. The 1s. denomination was issued in the following month, the delay being caused by the original design requiring to be redrawn in England.