

The designs for the stamps were drawn, from subject-matter supplied by the Cook Islands Department, by Mr. L. C. Mitchell, of Wellington. The design for the 1s. denomination was, however, redrawn in England from a photograph supplied by His Majesty the King. The printing-plates were manufactured in England by Messrs. Perkins, Bacon, and Co., and supplies of the stamps were also printed by that company. Subsequent printings will be made at the Government Printing Office, Wellington.

For many years past there have been separate series of stamps for the Islands of Aitutaki, Niue, Penrhyn, and Rarotonga. The series for Aitutaki, Niue, and Penrhyn respectively were for use in the islands of those names. The Rarotongan series was used not only in the Island of Rarotonga, but also in the remaining islands of the Cook group not provided with special stamps. It is proposed to withdraw these old series from sale at the 31st December next, leaving on sale only one series (the new series) for Niue (which has a separate administration and no means of direct communication with Rarotonga, the headquarters of the Cook Group), and one series (the new series) for the rest of the group.

Other stamp-issues for the islands during the year were denominations of 2d., 2s. 6d., 5s., 10s., and £1, for both Niue and Rarotonga. The 2d. denomination, which was issued in April, was necessitated by the increase in postage rates from the 1st March, 1931; and the means adopted was the overprinting of the words "Two Pence" on 1½d. stamps of Niue and Rarotonga, the 1½d. stamps being no longer required. The other denominations were issued in November, and were provided by overprinting the words "Niue" and "Rarotonga" on the latest issue of "Duty" stamps of the Dominion (New Zealand Coat of Arms).

AIR-MAIL STAMPS.

On account of the development in recent years of the air-mail services of the world and the consequent increase in volume of correspondence posted in New Zealand for conveyance by air while *en route* to destinations abroad, it was decided to introduce a series of air-mail stamps. In accordance with this decision the first series of such stamps to be issued by the Department was placed on sale on the 10th November. The denominations were 3d. (chocolate), 4d. (mauve), and 7d. (cadmium brown), these amounts being the initial air-mail fees then in operation for correspondence carried by the air-mail services abroad most used by New Zealand correspondents. The design of the stamps, which is the same for each denomination, consists of a typical New Zealand lake scene with mountains in the background, native bush in the foreground, and an aeroplane flying over the lake. The design was drawn by Mr. L. C. Mitchell, of Wellington, and the plates were manufactured at the Royal Mint, London.

The issue of the new stamps coincided with the first of a number of special air-mail flights that were performed in New Zealand during the year (see pages 12 and 13). Before the Christmas flights were undertaken, it was decided to issue a 5d. air-mail stamp (combining the initial postage and air-mail charges on a letter sent by air in the inland service). This 5d. stamp was issued on the 18th December, and consisted of the overprint "Five Pence" (in carmine red) on stamps printed in light green from the 3d. air-mail stamp plate.

It is proposed to issue a new series of air-mail stamps, competitive designs for which are now in the possession of the Department.

"CHARITY" STAMPS.

The system of raising money for charitable objects by means of "Charity" stamps was continued during the year. Two denominations of stamps of new design were placed on sale on the 31st October, and withdrawn on the 29th February. The denominations were 2d. and 3d., each including 1d. to be devoted to a charitable object. The total number of stamps sold was 187,931, the gross value being approximately £2,035, compared with £1,730 the previous year. The "Charity" portion of the net proceeds is distributed at the direction of the Minister of Health.

STAMPS OF GOVERNMENT INSURANCE DEPARTMENT.

In November the colour of the 3d. denomination of the special stamps issued for the use of the Government Insurance Department was changed from yellow-brown to chocolate, the colour of the current 3d. stamp of the Dominion. In addition, it has been decided, to avoid confusion between the 1d. and 6d. denominations of insurance stamps, that the 6d. stamp shall in future be printed in cadmium brown, the colour previously used for the 1½d. denomination of the series. The latter denomination, being no longer required, will be withdrawn from sale when present stocks are exhausted.

POSTAL STATIONERY.

Registered-letter envelopes embossed 6d. (postage 2d., registration 4d.) were issued in July, following on the increases made in the postage and registration charges.

POSTAGE ON NEWSPAPERS.

Newspapers printed and published in New Zealand may now be forwarded to Empire countries at a charge of 1d. for each 16 oz., instead of each 6 oz. The amended rate was introduced on the 13th April, closely following the previous alteration of the 1st March, 1931.

On the 10th August an inland postage rate was introduced of ½d. for each newspaper not exceeding 3 oz. in weight.