

NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF STORES.

Head Office, Wellington, 25th November, 1907.
SEPARATE written tenders will be received at this office up to noon of MONDAY, 23rd December, 1907, for the Supply and Delivery of Stores, from 1st of April, 1908, to 31st March, 1911, at Auckland, Wellington, Ashington (Chilly), Miluane (Hunedin), Greyouth, and Westport. Specifications and forms of tender may be obtained at the Railway Stores Office, Newmarket, Ashington, Hillside, Greyouth, Westport, and the Stores Manager's Office, Wellington, at which places statements showing the local consumption of articles chiefly in demand will be on view up to 10th December.

Tenders to be addressed to "The General Manager, New Zealand Railways, Wellington," and to be marked outside, "Tender for Stores."

Telegraphic tenders will not be received and the lowest or any tender will not necessarily be accepted.

The accepted tenders will be published in the New Zealand Gazette.

T. RONAYNE,
General Manager, New Zealand Railways.



COUSINS' BADGES.

Cousins requiring badges are requested to send an addressed envelope, when the badge will be forwarded by return mail.

COUSINS' CORRESPONDENCE.

Dear Cousin Kate,—I was very glad indeed to see my letter in print last week. My health is first rate and I sincerely hope yours is the same. Captain Ryan's oil launch came up last Saturday, and it stuck in the mud about a mile from Taupo; but now it is in Lake Taupo. The Church of England over at Tokaanu is being built. Mr. Chisholm and Mr. Reid are building it. On Saturday a very successful ball came off in Mr. Rewell's new billiard-room. People might as well call it a "Darkie's Entertainment" instead of a ball. Mr. Jimmy Scrubber Pig was M.C.; he really was, Cousin Kate. Aunty Riri came home last week from holiday-making in Auckland, and she brought back some Christmas cards. I must conclude, with love to all the cousins, remembering yourself. I remain, your loving cousin, TAI.

P.S.—Tell me what this riddle is, Cousin Kate: Hairy all over, rough on the skin, two waggars, and one gone in.—T.R.

[Dear Cousin Tai,—Did you go to the ball and dance, or are you considered too young to go to dances yet? It must have been amusing, and how did the pig get in, and how did they get him out again? I wonder how long it will be before the Church is finished? It always seems to take such a long time, doesn't it? though not so long as it does to pay for it. Were the Christmas cards your aunt bought very pretty? I don't think I have seen any of this year's yet. I haven't the vaguest idea what the answer to that riddle is; in fact, I give it up.—Cousin Kate.]

Dear Cousin Kate,—It is quite a long time since I wrote to you. When you come up to Tiraupou you must try and see the hatchery. It is very interesting to see the fish, especially when they are being fed. It is so pretty to see the large fish jump up from the water when the food is thrown into the ponds. Their food consists of raw liver, which is minced up. The eggs are lovely, they are like large white hailstones (the wild ova is pink). The luby fish, or fry, are kept in long troughs, with water constantly running through them. The fry are fed with boiled liver grated up. I passed my examination, and I am in standard six. I want Arthur to join the Cousins' Society, but he says he hates letter-writing. I wear my badge on my sailor hat. We spent our holiday on Dominion Day in school. I think it was too bad. The answer to my riddle, "What goes round a button?" is "A goat goes round a button" (a button). Love to the cousins and yourself, from Cousin LUCY.

[Dear Cousin Lucy,—When I come to Tiraupou I shall certainly make a point of going to the hatchery, that is if they let stray travellers in. It must be in-

teresting, and I have never seen anything of the sort, and should love it. I am glad you passed your examination; it must be such a relief to have it over and done with for a year. Why didn't you have a holiday on Dominion Day? I thought everyone had to have one. It certainly was very hard luck to have to stay in school when all the other schools were having a holiday; almost enough to make one take the matter into one's own hands and stay away. The riddle was very good; I should never have guessed it.—Cousin Kate.]

Dear Cousin Kate,—I am so glad you let me join the cousins' band. Thanks for the badge; I like red, don't you? The kitten cannot reach the doves' cage for it is on logs. The eggs did not hatch. I am sending the "Star" this week. You will be pleased, I hope, with our show. I got some prizes. I got two 1st and special prizes for button-holes, 1st and 2nd for turnips, and 1st for radishes. Father and mother have got some prizes, too. I have over three hundred post-cards. I have only just finished Swiss Family Robinson. With love, from Cousin WILLIE.

[Dear Cousin Willie,—I am glad to hear that the doves are safe. Cats are so cruel with birds, I think, and even if they don't kill them they frighten them so; though I have a bird that is too much for the cats, and the dogs, too, for that matter. It is a very large white cockatoo, and when he is loose on the grass they have to keep out of the way. He bit the cat's tail the other day so badly that it won't go near the cage now. Weren't you very proud of yourself for winning all those prizes? I should have been. You must have had to work very hard in your garden, though, to get such good results. I remember when I read the Swiss Family Robinson thinking that no other book could be so good, but after I had read Robinson Crusoe I did not care a bit about it.—Cousin Kate.]

Dear Cousin Kate,—I was very pleased to see my letter in the "Graphic," and thank you very much for the nice answer. I received my badge safely, and nothing was broken. I was glad to get it. A swarm of bees settled in front of our place in the hedge, and my father went and caught them in the night when they were quiet. My brother Bernard and I go down the paddocks and help father to get the sheep into the pen; there are such a lot of nice lambs. The weather seems to be a little settled now—I wonder how long it will last. Our garden is coming on finely now. The Druids held their annual sports on the beach on the 11th of November, which went off very successfully. My sister can play the accordion very nicely. To-day my brother and my three sisters and I walked a mile to try and catch some white-bait, but we were not lucky enough to catch any; so we started for home, and were ready for a good tea when we got there. This is all I can say this time. I remain, yours truly, Cousin RODERICK.

[Dear Cousin Roderick,—I am glad you were pleased with the letter and

badge, and that no damage was done on the trip down. I have often wanted to see a swarm of bees, but I doubt if I would have the courage to go close enough to see them properly. It is really hard work getting sheep into pens, isn't it? Either they are horribly obstinate or very stupid; anyway, they are very aggravating. We have had the most lovely weather for the last fortnight; so fine, in fact, that I heard some people in the cars saying they thought we were in for a drought, and the garden is certainly beginning to look very dry. I thought it was too late for white-bait now.—Cousin Kate.]

Official Cats in America.

It is a curious fact that the Government of the United States maintains and provides for numerous cats. The army has its regular corps of them, kept at the commissary depots of the great cities, and each draws regular pay equal to eighteen dollars and twenty-five cents a year.

It is customary for the officer in charge of each depot to submit to the War Department a request for an allowance for so many cats, and the regulations provide that meat shall be purchased for them at a price not greater than five cents a pound, to which a stated quantity of canned milk is added for variety. Experiment has shown that no matter how excellent a hunter a cat may be, nor how abundant the mice, no cat will thrive properly on a diet of the unmitigated mouse; nor does it neglect its duties when other food is provided.

Bids for the cats' meat are regularly posted, calling for "fresh beef suitable for feeding cats, bone to be excluded, to be delivered at the contractor's place of business on such days as may be designated, and in such quantities as may be required."

More than four hundred cats are in the employ of the Post Office Department, distributed among about fifty of the largest offices. The New York city office expends some sixty dollars annually in cats' meat.

Most of the other large Government buildings are supplied with cats. At the immense cold storage depot established a year or so ago at Manila, cats were found to be necessary, and so tabbies were sent from the famous cold storage breed of Pittsburg. This breed originated in the great warehouses of a cold storage company, and has developed special qualifications for enduring extreme cold. The cold storage cats are short tailed, chubby, with long and heavy fur, and their eyebrows and whiskers are extraordinarily long and strong. It is said that they do not thrive when transferred to an ordinary temperature.

"Johnny, where have you been? Your hair is suspiciously wet. School was out two hours ago."

"I fell in the creek."

"But your clothes are not wet."

"Well, you see, Mamma, while I was standing on the bridge I thought maybe I'd fall in, so I took off my clothes, and I did."

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