

A new pictorial series of stamps for the Cook Islands was placed on sale on the 1st August, 1949, replacing the previous issue which had been in use since 1932. The new set comprises ten denominations ranging from $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 3s., the total value being 8s. $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. It depicts various historical and other aspects of the Cook Islands. The designs were the work of Mr. J. Berry, and the stamps were printed by Messrs Waterlow and Sons, Ltd., London.

A stamp with the denomination of 5d., representing the initial air-mail fee on correspondence for New Zealand, was added to the current set of Western Samoa, on the 8th June, 1949. The stamp, which features a view of the Apia Post-office, was designed by Mr. L. C. Mitchell, of Wellington, and was printed by Messrs Bradbury, Wilkinson, and Co., Ltd., New Malden, Surrey, England.

OVERSEAS POSTAGE-RATES: INCREASES CONSEQUENT UPON DEVALUATION OF STERLING

Following the devaluation of sterling in relation to the dollar, the postage-rates for certain overseas air-mail and parcel-post services in respect of which transport costs are paid in dollars, were increased with effect from the 4th January, 1950. The principal increases were—

- (i) Air-mail correspondence for United States of America and Canada for despatch by Pan-American Service: Letters increased from 1s. 6d. to 2s. each $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. and letter-cards increased from 6d. to 8d.
- (ii) Parcels for United States of America: (a) Direct route—Rates increased from 7d. to 9d. a pound; (b) Route via Canada—Rates increased from 9d. to 1s. a pound.

OVERSEAS AIR MAILS

AIR-MAIL SERVICE FOR TRANSMISSION OVERSEAS OF SECOND-CLASS ARTICLES

A service for the transmission overseas by air mail of second-class articles (news-papers, printed papers, commercial papers, samples, and “small packets”) was introduced on the 1st February, 1950. The postage-rates are approximately two-thirds of those for letters. The new service extends to Australia, United Kingdom, Canada, U.S.A., and to the majority of countries to which air-letter services are available.

The question of providing an air parcel-post service to certain overseas countries is now under examination.

TRANS-TASMAN SERVICE

The air mail to Australia provides a very fast service. A letter posted in Auckland early in the day can be sorted into a private box in Sydney the same afternoon, or delivered by postman the next day. The service was inaugurated in 1940 and has grown continuously in popularity. Last year, with daily Trans-Tasman despatches, 70 per cent. of letters for Australia were sent by air.

During the year the weight of mail despatched from New Zealand by the Tasman service was: letters, 161,154 lb.; second-class matter (two months' traffic), 1,751 lb. In the reverse direction, the weight of mail was: letters, 228,350 lb.; second-class matter (two months' traffic), 5,219 lb.