

The letters and letter-cards increased 5·12, post-cards 5·31, other articles 1·64, and parcels 20·61 per cent.

In 1908 letters and letter-cards increased 11·06, post-cards 18·37, other articles 11·82, and parcels 19·80 per cent.

The average number of letters and letter-cards posted per head of population was estimated to be 95·98. The average in 1908 was 91·37.

The correspondence of 96 persons or firms has been prohibited transmission under section 28 of the Post and Telegraph Act, 1908. Money-orders may not be issued in favour of such persons or firms.

Twenty-three newspapers were registered for transmission by post, and 27 were removed from the register.

The declared value of parcels received from places outside the Dominion in 1909 was £279,684, as against £323,481 in 1908. The Customs duty collected amounted to £52,540 13s. 8d.

The declared value of parcels despatched to places beyond the Dominion was £33,071, as against £37,109 in 1908.

Four new letter-carriers' deliveries were established. Deliveries were extended in 13 and increased in frequency in 7 places.

Eighty-eight receiving-boxes were established, and 3 closed.

On Saturdays, from the beginning of October to the end of March yearly, the hours of duty at the Head Office, General Post Office, Wellington, were made from 8 a.m. – noon, instead of 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. The new arrangement commenced on the 30th October, 1909.

Roller obliterating-stamps, without date, have been adopted for cancelling the postage on newspapers.

POSTAGE-STAMPS.

The three-halfpenny stamp was withdrawn from circulation from the 31st October, 1909, those remaining unsold being destroyed.

A new issue of stamps was brought into use on the 8th November, 1909, the denominations being $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d., 2d., 3d., 4d., 5d., 6d., 8d., and 1s. Each value excepting 1d. bears an impression of the late King's head, and the penny stamp is of the same general design as heretofore, except that "Dominion of New Zealand" is substituted for "New Zealand," and the value appears in arabic numerals in addition to the value in words. The halfpenny and penny stamps are printed by the surface process. The stamps at 2d., 3d., 4d., 5d., 6d., 8d., and 1s., which are engraved for the recess process of printing, exhibit very fine workmanship. All the plates were prepared in London, the printing being done in New Zealand.

New stamp booklets containing eighteen stamps at 1d. and eleven at $\frac{1}{2}$ d. have been printed, and will be on sale at 2s. each as soon as the old issue is exhausted.

OCEAN MAIL-SERVICES.

Suez Service.

The greater portion of the mails to and from the United Kingdom and Europe has been despatched and received by way of Suez. The special connecting service, Wellington to Sydney, has been running with great regularity throughout the year, one connection only being missed, the vessel from Wellington on the 11th June, 1909, being delayed by bad weather. The inward connection is, however, not satisfactory. Until the 14th March, 1910, the inward mails from London conveyed by the P. and O. steamers were timed to reach Sydney on alternate Mondays, while the mails conveyed by the Orient steamers were not due until the Wednesday. From the date named, the Orient as well as the P. and O. mails are timed to reach Sydney on Monday. The steamer for New Zealand continues to leave Sydney on Wednesday. Repeated efforts have been made to induce the Union Steam Ship Company to alter the day of departure to Monday; but, although the company has expressed its willingness to make the alteration if practicable, action has been delayed as the company has not been able to see its way to make the extensive changes in the intercolonial running which the proposal would involve. Unfortunately, the wreck of the "Waikare" has, it is understood, intensified the difficulties, which were in a fair way of being removed. Negotiations are still proceeding.

Payments on Account of the Peninsular and Oriental, and Orient. Mail-service during the Year 1909 10.

			£	£
Payment to Peninsular and Oriental and Orient lines	..	..	..	10,784
Transit charges across Australia and Europe	..	..	..	6,419
Mail-service to Australia	..	..	15,000	
Proportion chargeable to mails for Commonwealth	..	..	4,000	
			—	11,000
				28,203

The maximum, minimum, and average number of days within which the mails were delivered at and from London, and Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin, by the Peninsular and Oriental and Orient lines was:—

		P. and O. Line.			Orient Line.		
		Max.	Min.	Average.	Max.	Min.	Average.
London to Auckland	..	38	36	37·23	42	37	38·56
Auckland to London	..	38	36	36·62	40	38	38·80
London to Wellington	..	39	35	38·19	40	38	38·78
Wellington to London	..	37	35	35·50	38	37	37·68
London to Christchurch	..	40	39	39·04	41	38	39·15
Christchurch to London	..	38	36	36·50	39	38	38·68
London to Dunedin	..	39	38	38·12	41	38	38·44
Dunedin to London	..	38	36	36·50	39	38	38·71