

PARCEL-POST.

Under amended parcel-post regulations which came into operation on the 1st September, 1913, no receipt is given to the sender of an ordinary inland parcel (as distinguished from a receipt-parcel), and no receipt for such parcel is taken by the Post Office on delivery to the addressee. For an inland receipt-parcel (the extra payment for which is 1d.) the Department gives a receipt to the sender at the office of posting and guarantees to take a receipt from the addressee on delivery. No claim for compensation for the loss or damage in the Post Office of an inland parcel is entertained unless a receipt has been paid for.

Delivery by mail contractor of articles by parcel-post was established at Gisborne on the 1st May, 1913.

During 1913 2,076,802 parcels were posted in the Dominion, as against 1,623,830 in 1912.

By Order in Council dated the 18th February, 1914, power was taken under the authority of section 57 of the Post and Telegraph Act, 1908, to sell by public auction to the highest bidder, without reserve, any unclaimed foreign parcel on which duty is payable. Previously such parcels could be sold only when the amount bid was sufficient to cover the duty assessed in each case.

The following proposals for improving the parcel-post system are under consideration :—

1. An increase from 11 lb. to 28 lb. in the limit of weight for places served by rail or steamer. The rates will be the same as at present up to 13 lb., the rate per pound above 13 lb. being 1d.
2. For the taking from the addressee of a receipt for each parcel delivered.
3. For the delivery to the sender of an acknowledgment of posting on payment of a fee of 1d.
4. For compensation up to £2 in the case of all uninsured parcels.
5. For an express transit system whereby the Department will guarantee to send a parcel forward by the first letter-mail.

POST OFFICE.

During 1913 the Assistant Inspectors of Post-offices visited 2,034 offices. 595 non-permanent offices were inspected by permanent Postmasters in their vicinity.

Eighty-four post-offices were established (of which 7 were reopened offices) and 51 closed. The number of post-offices open at the end of the year was 2,383. The names of 17 offices were changed to meet local circumstances.

The number of articles delivered in the Dominion, including those received from places beyond, during the year 1913 as compared with the number in 1912 was as under :—

	1913.	1912.	Increase.	Decrease.
Letters and letter-cards ..	113,413,664	108,143,256	5,270,408	..
Post-cards	5,733,364	6,058,962	..	325,598
Other articles	51,931,243	54,068,196	..	2,136,953
	171,078,271	168,270,414	..	..
Parcels	2,199,032	1,735,567	463,465	..

The letters and letter-cards increased 4·87, post-cards decreased 5·37, other articles decreased 3·95, and parcels increased 26·70 per cent. The decrease in the number of post-cards may be accounted for by the continued decline in the popularity of the pictorial post-card.

The decrease in the number of other articles is principally attributable to the fact that the inland postal rates on letters and on other articles being now almost identical, correspondence formerly sent as printed or commercial matter is forwarded by letter-post. Probably the industrial crisis towards the close of 1913 is also responsible for some shrinkage.

In 1912 letters and letter-cards increased 1·88, post-cards decreased 11·28, other articles increased 0·96 per cent. The average number of letters and letter-cards posted by unit of population during 1913 was estimated at 101·91. The average in 1912 was 102·06.

The declared value of parcels received from places outside the Dominion in 1913 was £475,143, as against £435,594 in 1912. The Customs duty amounted to £80,546 19s. 3d.

The declared value of parcels despatched to places beyond the Dominion in 1913 was £51,562, as against £39,432 in 1912.

The correspondence of 37 persons or firms was 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. Letters addressed to prohibited persons or firms withheld from delivery during the year numbered 2,075. Prohibition was withdrawn in respect of nine persons or firms.

Fourteen newspapers were registered for transmission by post, and 16 were removed from the register.

Eight new letter-carriers' deliveries were established. Deliveries were extended in 24 and increased in frequency in 9 places.

From the 1st January, 1914, the rental for a private box at a place where a letter-carrier's delivery is established was reduced by one-half to a holder living beyond the limits of the delivery.

Automatic stamp-vending machines were erected at 5 offices. Six machines were installed in the Exhibition building at Auckland during the currency of the Exhibition.

All branches of the Department's business were conducted at the Auckland Exhibition from the 1st December, 1913, to the 25th April following.

Post and telegraph offices were opened at the military camps at Hautapu, Takapau, Kowai, and Matarae.

Slight alterations were made in the prices charged for packets of postal stationery.