

On three occasions the steamers from Wellington failed to connect with the outward English mail at Sydney.

On arrival of the English mail by the "Maheno" at Auckland on the 13th July, 1913, it was found that a mail-bag and an enclosed registered-letter bag had been cut open and two boxes of jewellery broken into, and their contents, to the value of £319 4s. 2d., abstracted. Police inquiries in London and New South Wales were fruitless. The robbery probably took place before the mails arrived at Sydney.

Auckland-Rarotonga-Tahiti and Auckland-Fiji Services.

The subsidy of £1,200 a year, which has been paid since 1885, for the Auckland-Rarotonga-Tahiti service to assist in the development of trade, and also the contract for the carrying of mails between Auckland and Fiji entered into in 1880, involving a subsidy of £1,690 per annum, will cease in June, 1914. Thereafter the usual poundage rates will be paid.

Payments on Account of the Suez Mail-service during the Year 1913-14.

	£
Payment to Peninsular and Oriental and Orient lines	10,784
Transit charges across Australia and Europe	7,178
Mail-service to Australia	15,289*
	£33,251

INLAND MAIL-SERVICES.

During the year motor-cars replaced the mail-coaches on three mail-routes in the Blenheim district, and are giving a quicker despatch for mails.

The extension of the railway-line from Cass to Halpin Creek has reduced, as from the 1st November last, the time of travel between Greymouth and Christchurch by one hour and thirteen minutes. It is hoped that this will do away with the winter delay to mails, as the railway has replaced the coaches over the worst part of the road.

During an outbreak of smallpox in July and August, 1913, mails received from infected areas were disinfected. Mails exchanged between the Dominion and the Commonwealth of Australia were treated similarly.

On the 26th November, 1913, a mail-coach upset in the Waiapu River near Kahukura. The mails were carried down the river, but were recovered with the exception of two private bags.

While crossing the Waipaoa River (Gisborne) a mail-coach overturned and was swept away. A bag containing the mail from Whatatutu to Wheturau was lost.

In consequence of heavy rainfall, the Main Trunk and New Plymouth express trains were held up on the 17th December, 1913, by slips north of Marton. The mails were brought on to Wellington by special relief train.

Owing to the interruption of railway traffic by floods in the Otago District during August, special arrangements were made to forward mails by motor and coach.

On the 23rd December, 1913, the Oturehua-Cambrian mail-coach was overturned in the Manuherikia River. One mail-bag was not recovered. No registered letters were lost.

The approaches to the Mararoa Bridge on the Lumsden - Te Anau Road were washed away on the 28th October, 1913, and caused the suspension of the mail-service for a week.

Serious floods in Southland on the 30th March caused damage to roads and railways. Interrupted mail-communication was restored within two days. Postal officers at Gore who were on duty in the early morning before the flood reached its maximum height in the township maintained communication by telegraph and telephone until the waters subsided. The Department suitably recognized their praiseworthy services.

DEAD AND MISSING LETTERS.

Six thousand inquiries for postal packets alleged to have been posted and not delivered were made during 1913. In 3,632 of these, investigation resulted in the missing articles being traced or accounted for. The cases may be summarized as follows:—

Number of Traced Cases.	Result.
965	Sender responsible for delay.
810	Addressee responsible for delay.
358	Post Office responsible for delay.
1,499	No delay, or responsibility not fixed.
3,632	

The undermentioned articles of value were found in letters in the Dead Letter Office and returned to senders where practicable: 751 post-office orders, £2,639 2s. 11d.; 67 bank drafts, £3,970 8s. 5d.; 877 cheques, £8,173 9s. 7d.; 23 dividend warrants, £67 8s. 4d.; 15 promissory notes, £451 18s.; postal notes, £578 17s.; British postal orders, £122 6s. 1d.; stamps, £52 12s. 0½d.; bank-notes (including a 20-dollar bill and a 15-rupee bank-note), £577 3s. 4d.; gold, £79 10s.; silver and copper, £15 9s. 1½d.: representing a total of £16,728 4s. 10d.

Amongst other things dealt with were 10 gold watches, 5 gold brooches, 9 gold chains, 30 gold rings, 7 gold tie-pins, 6 gold bangles, 1 gold medal, 5 gold sleeve-links, 5 gold pendants, 5 small gold

* Includes £4,000 for New Zealand - Australian mails.