

vessel replaced the R.M.S. "Maunganui" on the San Francisco service. A satisfactory service was maintained over both the Vancouver and San Francisco routes during the year. The R.M.S. "Niagara" and the R.M.M.S. "Aorangi" are now employed on the Vancouver service, and the R.M.S. "Tahiti" and R.M.S. "Makura" on the San Francisco service.

On occasions when the time for transferring mails between the Pacific and Atlantic coasts was limited there was a danger of the mails from New Zealand missing connection with the fast Atlantic liners sailing from New York on Wednesdays. The Secretary, on his way to the Postal Union Congress at Stockholm, investigated the method of handling New Zealand mails in transit through the United States of America. As a result, this Administration's mails are enabled to make the connection at New York, notwithstanding that the time available is so short. This Dominion is indebted to the United States postal and railway officials for their valued co-operation.

INTERCOLONIAL MAIL-SERVICES.

The mail-service between New Zealand and Australia and *vice versa* was well maintained during the year.

INLAND MAIL-SERVICES.

As a result of torrential rain on the 3rd and 4th April, 1924, a heavy flood occurred in the North Auckland district, between Helensville and Paparoa, disorganizing communication by rail and road. It became necessary to hire a launch to convey between Helensville and Port Albert and Batley mails for a number of offices inland. The northern Taranaki district also suffered similarly, the Waitara-Awakino and Stratford-Tahora routes being completely blocked for some days. The Main Trunk express, which ran into a landslide near Te Kuiti, narrowly escaped disaster.

On the 19th May, 1924, the river-boat "Wai-iti," which was conveying mails on the Wanganui River, was wrecked about two miles from Taumarunui through the breaking-down of the steering-gear. A small quantity of mail-matter was lost.

On the 12th May, 1924, the s.s. "Ngahere" was wrecked at the entrance to Greymouth Harbour. One bag of mail, Hokitika for Wellington, was lost.

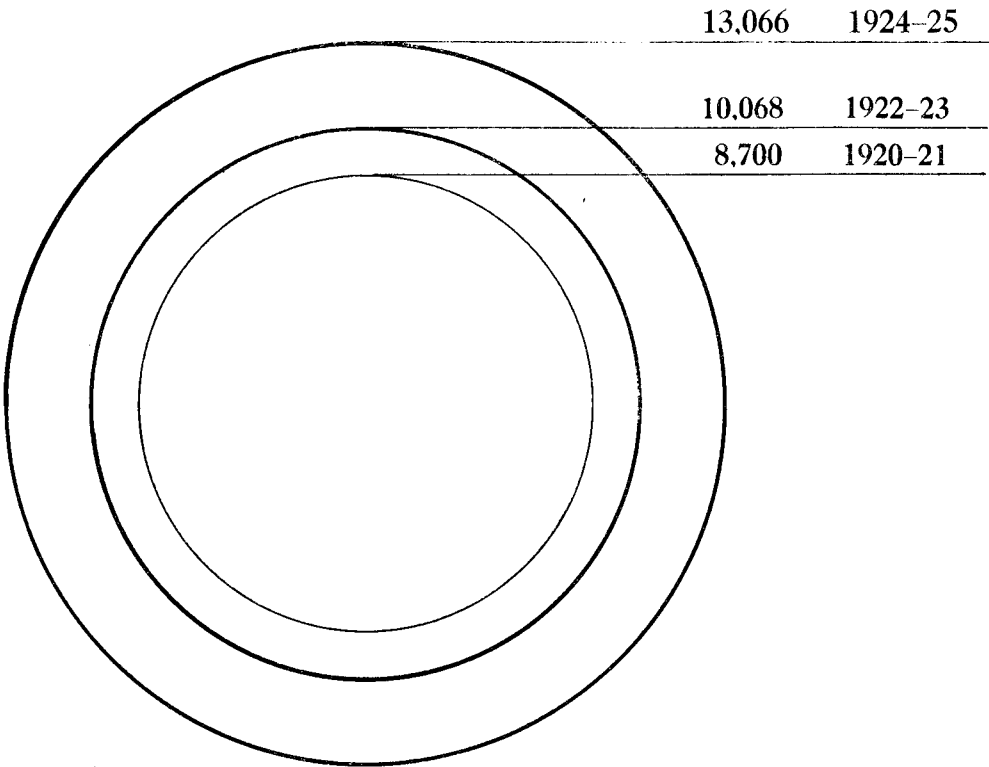
On the 26th May, 1924, mails from Port Levy to Lyttelton were lost by the capsizing of the launch "Toitoi" at the Lyttelton Heads.

In May, 1924, owing to heavy rain, the Takaka township became flooded, and mail-services in the Takaka and Collingwood districts suffered interruption. Similarly, in the same month, serious floods between Te Aroha, Waihi, and Thames disorganized railway and road communication. Low-lying areas were inundated, and difficulty was experienced in transporting mails.

Towards the end of May, 1924, a heavy storm on the east coast of the North Island, which lasted nearly a week, prevented all mail communication with offices north of Tokomaru Bay.

RURAL-MAILS.

There are now 13,066 rural boxes in use, an increase of 2,454 over the number in use last year. The number of rural routes in operation at present is 273, as against 235 last year.



THE EVER-WIDENING CIRCLE.—EXTENSION OF RURAL-DELIVERY SERVICE.