

use of the exchanger enables certain correspondence from the Auckland, Taranaki, and Napier districts, and from Palmerston North, to reach Levin nearly four hours earlier, and certain correspondence from Levin to be delivered in Wellington some eighteen hours earlier.

OCEAN MAILS.

Mail-services to and from Great Britain via North America have been speeded up and placed on a better basis. Regularity in the departure and arrival of contract vessels has been ensured.

MARINE POST OFFICE.

In 1923 the system of employing mail-agents on the mail-steamers plying between Wellington and San Francisco and between Auckland and Vancouver was reintroduced. The result has been of considerable advantage to the business community and to residents outside the centres, in that delivery of overseas mails is made from twelve to twenty-four hours earlier than under the old system. The presence of mail-agents on the steamers also permits the Department to accept letters up to a later hour.

In addition to their ordinary duties, the mail-agents act as publicity agents for the New Zealand Railway Department. While *en voyage* they take the opportunity of advising passengers of the beauties and grandeurs of New Zealand scenery, of the tourist resorts, and of the almost unique opportunities for sportsmen. Lectures on these features are delivered at gatherings of passengers, and every help given in arranging tours in New Zealand. The agents are meeting with considerable success in their work, and but for their efforts many people who have toured the Dominion would have passed New Zealand by.

AERIAL MAILS.

In 1920 experiments were made with the carriage of mails by aircraft. Trials were made by seaplane between Auckland and surrounding districts, from Gisborne to Tokomaru Bay and to Napier, from Wanganui to Napier, and by aeroplane from Christchurch to Timaru via Ashburton. Letters were carried by air for the small additional postage fee of 6d. It was found, however, that the time was not then ripe for introducing, as a permanent arrangement, the system of aerial carriage of mails.

RURAL MAIL DELIVERIES.

Since 1922 a nominal charge for the delivery and collection at settlers' gates of mail-matter in rural areas has been made. The revenue so obtained has enabled the Department to extend the rural delivery system to more remote districts, and thus to bring the farmer into closer touch with the markets. It has also enabled the Department to effect improvements in mail communication with places which formerly were served but inadequately. The popularity of the rural delivery system is evidenced by the growth in the number of boxes—from nine thousand in 1922 to eighteen thousand in 1928.

PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS.

The year 1927 marked the inauguration of publicity campaigns by the Post and Telegraph Department.

CONSOLIDATION OF POST AND TELEGRAPH ACTS.

In 1928 the Post and Telegraph Act, 1908, and amending Acts were consolidated in the Post and Telegraph Act, 1928.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MEMBERSHIP.

In order to assist the commercial community, permission was given in 1921 for Chief Postmasters and Postmasters to accept membership of Chambers of Commerce as representatives of the Department. The Chief Postmaster or Postmaster states the views of the Department on any departmental matter that comes up for discussion, and gives his prompt personal attention to any matter on which action requires to be taken.