

TRANSFER OF NORTHERN PORTION OF COROMANDEL PENINSULA FROM AUCKLAND TO THAMES POSTAL DISTRICT.

The northern portion of the Coromandel Peninsula, of which the principal offices are Coromandel and Whitianga, was transferred from the Auckland to the Thames Postal District on the 1st August, 1929. The whole of the peninsula is now in the Thames District. The transfer followed on the provision of a first-class road between Coromandel and Thames and the inauguration of a daily mail-service.

POST OFFICE.

CASH-ON-DELIVERY PARCEL-POST.

The cash-on-delivery service for post parcels exchanged between Great Britain, Northern Ireland, the Irish Free State, and New Zealand, which was introduced on the 1st January, 1920, was, as a matter of Government policy, abolished on the 31st October, 1929.

POSTAL UNION CONGRESS, LONDON, 1929.

The ninth Postal Union Congress assembled in London on the 10th May, 1929. Although the Postal Union was founded over fifty-five years ago, this was the first occasion on which Congress had met in London.

Delegates and attachés in attendance at the Congress numbered 191. Altogether eighty-five administrations were represented. New Zealand was represented by the Secretary of the Department, Mr. G. McNamara.

The Congress was opened in the Royal Gallery of the House of Lords by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

The first plenary sitting was held on the 13th May, in the building of the Civil Service Commission, in Burlington Gardens, and Brigadier-General F. H. Williamson, C.B., C.B.E., Director of Postal Services in Great Britain and principal British delegate to the Congress, was elected President. During the period that Congress was in session nine plenary sittings were held. In addition there were held twenty sittings of the First Committee (Convention), twelve sittings of the Second Committee (post parcels and insured articles), and five sittings of the Third Committee (money-order, postal transfers, cash-on-delivery, newspaper, and periodical subscriptions).

A sub-committee examined designs of a new reply coupon submitted by nineteen competitors. The sub-committee's recommendation that the design awarded first prize be accepted, with certain modifications, in place of the existing reply coupon was adopted. The new design of coupon will come into use on the 1st July, 1930. The minimum selling-price of the reply coupon was reduced from 40 centimes (4d.) to 37½ centimes (3½d.).

No change was made in the postage-rates for letters, post-cards, commercial papers, printed papers, and samples as fixed by the Stockholm Congress in 1924, except that the extent to which Administrations are permitted to increase these rates was reduced from 60 to 50 per cent.

An International Air Mail Conference was held at The Hague in September, 1927, when certain conditions were laid down for the exchange of air mails. These conditions, with slight modifications, were incorporated in the Universal Postal Union Convention. From the viewpoint of the public the following are the more important points covered by the Air Mail Convention: Letters, post-cards, printed papers, commercial papers, samples, and money-orders may be forwarded by air mail. Postage and air-mail fees may be prepaid by means of ordinary postage-stamps or automatic stamping-machine impressions. Correspondence for despatch by air mail must have affixed to the top left-hand corner of the front of the cover a special blue label "By air mail." The registration system applies to correspondence for despatch by air mail. Air-mail correspondence will not be redirected by air mail unless the addressee has previously instructed the reforwarding office and has paid in advance to that office the air-mail charge for onward transmission.

The maximum air-mail charge was fixed at 25 gold centimes (2½d.) for each 20 grammes ($\frac{5}{7}$ oz.), for each 1,000 air kilometres travelled (621 miles). Air transit charges are settled on the basis of statistics taken during the seven days following the 14th June and the 14th November in each year.

An alteration of importance was made in respect of the method of taking statistics for calculating payments due to Administrations for the transit of correspondence. Under the system previously in force, each bag of mail-matter was weighed at the office of despatch as well as at the office of receipt. This was laborious, and Congress decided to introduce by way of trial an accounting arrangement based on the number of bags despatched. For statistical purposes the bags are divided into three categories—(1) of light bags, not exceeding 5 kilograms; (2) of medium bags, exceeding 5 kilograms but not exceeding 15 kilograms; and (3) of heavy bags, exceeding 15 kilograms but not exceeding 30 kilograms. For the purpose of calculating the rate, the average weights of bags of the three categories have been fixed at 4, 12, and 24 kilograms, respectively. The first statistics under the new scheme will be taken in October–November, 1933, and will apply to the years 1932, 1933, and 1934.

Congress made provision in the Convention for the introduction, at the discretion of the Administrations concerned, of a "small packet" service. The maximum weight for small packets is fixed at 2 lb., and the postage-rate adopted is 5d. for the first 6 oz. and 1½d. for each additional 2 oz. The maximum dimensions are 18 in., in any direction, or, if in the form of a roll, 30 in. by 4 in. The object of the "small packet" service is to provide a cheap means for the despatch with letter-mails of small articles of merchandise, souvenirs, &c., which may be liable to payment of Customs duty on