

POST OFFICE.

INCREASE IN POSTAGE RATES.

To obtain revenue for the Consolidated Fund for the year ending the 31st March, 1932, postage rates and charges were increased as under on the 1st March, 1931:—

Item.	Old Rate.	New Rate.
Letters and letter-cards for inland delivery	1d. for first ounce and $\frac{1}{2}$ d. for each additional ounce	2d. for first ounce and 1d. for each additional ounce.
Letters and letter-cards addressed to places within the Empire, United States, and certain other places	1d. for each ounce	2d. for first ounce and 1d. for each additional ounce.
Late fee	1d.	2d.
Post-cards (inland)	$\frac{1}{2}$ d.	1d.
Inland packets	$\frac{1}{2}$ d. for each 2 oz. or fraction thereof up to 2 lb., and 2d. for each additional pound up to 5 lb.	1d. for each 4 oz. or fraction thereof up to 1 lb., and 4d. for each additional pound up to 5 lb.
Registered magazines	Each copy 1d. for each 8 oz. or fraction thereof	Each copy 2d. for each 8 oz. or fraction thereof.
Newspapers— Inland	$\frac{1}{2}$ d. per copy	Each copy 1d. for each 8 oz. (From 23rd March, rate altered to 1d. for each 16 oz.)
Overseas to all places to which Postal Union rates do not apply	1d. per copy	Each copy 1d. for each 6 oz. (From 13th April, rate altered to 1d. for each 16 oz.)
Registration	3d.	4d.
Acknowledgment of receipt of registered article	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.	3d.
Parcels (inland)	Not exceeding 1 lb., 6d.; for each additional pound up to 10 lb., 2d.; and for each additional pound up to 28 lb., 1d.; maximum weight, 28 lb.; maximum size, 7 ft. in length and girth combined	Not exceeding 1 lb., 6d.; not exceeding 2 lb., 1s.; for each additional pound up to 11 lb., 3d.; maximum weight, 11 lb.; maximum size, 6 ft. in length and girth combined.
Parcels (inland) containing fishing-rods and golf-clubs exceeding 3 ft. 6 in. but not exceeding 4 ft. 6 in. in length	Not exceeding 3 lb., 1s. 6d.; for each additional pound or fraction thereof up to 11 lb., 3d.	Not exceeding 3 lb., 2s. 6d.; for each additional pound or fraction thereof up to 11 lb., 3d.
Fragile fee— For ordinary sized parcels	6d.	1s.
For light bulky parcels	9d.	1s. 6d.
Insurance of parcels (inland)	Minimum fee, 3d.	Minimum fee, 4d.
Undelivered printer matter returned to sender	$\frac{1}{2}$ d.	1d.
Customs clearance fee	3d.	6d.

INLAND MAIL SERVICES.

Except for the interruptions due to the earthquake in Hawke's Bay, particulars of which are furnished in the paragraph concerning the earthquake published on page 14 of this report, mail-services by road have been performed with regularity throughout the year.

The contracts for the various services performed under contract in the North Island expired on the 31st December, and new contracts were arranged for a further period of three years from the 1st January. The result of the reletting was most satisfactory, a saving in subsidies of approximately £4,500 per annum being effected, notwithstanding that a number of improvements were effected. For most services there was keen competition. There was a noticeable increase in the number of tenders received for "blocks" of services. There is a distinct tendency towards the centralization in the larger towns of the commencing-points of the services to outlying districts, the existence of many motor passenger services resulting in road mail-services being run from the larger centres.

Gisborne is now provided with a night mail-service by road to and from Napier, with the result that all mail-matter (except ordinary parcels) is available in Gisborne twenty-four hours after despatch from Wellington. Parcels that are not sent "express transit" reach Gisborne thirty-eight hours after leaving Wellington. Previously letters only were carried on the night service, and parcels and second-class matter on a next-day service. The cost of the new service is considerably less than the cost of the former separate services.

Another improvement was effected by arranging for mails to and from Kaitaia and Awanui and other places in the district to be conveyed via the Mangamuka Gorge. Formerly most of the Kaitaia and Awanui mails were conveyed via Kaeo and Mangonui.

Rawene and other places on or adjacent to the Hokianga River, previously served by launch from Horeke, are now served by road from Kaikohe.

The mail-service route for Dargaville has also been altered. Mails for and from that place are now transported by rail and road via Tangowahine (the present terminus of the new railway for Dargaville) at a considerable saving in cost, the former contract river mail-service between Helensville and Dargaville having been dispensed with.