

On the 22nd May floods dislocated for several days a number of mail-services in the Masterton and Carterton districts.

A severe snowstorm on the 9th June interrupted a number of services in the Mid-Canterbury and Christchurch districts.

On the 8th July a large slip on the railway between Gisborne and Motuhora interrupted the service, and necessitated the use of departmental motor-vehicles for the conveyance of the mails from Gisborne to offices on the railway.

During the period 22nd to 24th July heavy floods resulted in some disorganization of the road mail-services in the North Auckland District. The railway mail connections suffered extensively, and steamers were used to maintain the services between Helensville and Dargaville and between Auckland and Whangarei. Use was also made of departmental vehicles to dispose of accumulations of mails at various points.

Mails are conveyed between the mainland and Stewart Island by the s.s. "Tamatea," whose owners have maintained an efficient service for the carriage of passengers, mails, and freight between Bluff and Half-moon Bay. The name of the vessel engaged in this service was incorrectly published in last year's report as the "Awarua."

OCEAN MAIL-SERVICES.

With two exceptions the Auckland-Vancouver and the Wellington-San Francisco ocean-mail-contract services were performed regularly during the year. The average times of transmission of mails by these services were as follows:—

Auckland to London (via Vancouver)	..	..	..	..	28·6 days.
London to Auckland (via Vancouver)	..	..	..	..	31·2 days.
Wellington to London (via San Francisco)	..	..	..	..	28·5 days.
London to Wellington (via San Francisco)	..	..	..	..	31·5 days.

The Vancouver service was maintained by the "Aorangi" and the "Niagara," and the San Francisco service by the "Makura" and the "Maunganui."

On the 17th July the "Niagara," shortly after leaving Victoria, B.C., for Auckland, came into collision with the m.v. "King Egbert." The damage sustained by the "Niagara" necessitated a return to Victoria for repairs, and the final departure of the vessel was delayed until 1st August. Mails for New Zealand were transhipped from the "Niagara" and forwarded by the "Mariposa," which left San Francisco on the 23rd July.

Owing to delay at Sydney, the "Niagara" was unable to be at Auckland in time for the contract trip scheduled to commence on the 15th October. Departure from Sydney was not made until the 19th October, and, in order to maintain the usual time-table from Vancouver, the call at Auckland was omitted on the outward voyage. New Zealand mails that in normal circumstances would have been despatched by the "Niagara" were forwarded by the "Mariposa." The mails suffered no delay in delivery in Great Britain.

The subsidy paid to the Canadian-Australasian Line in respect of the Vancouver service, which was reduced in 1931 from £20,000 to £18,000 per annum, was increased to the former amount from the 1st April, 1935.

The New Zealand-Australia service was maintained by the "Wanganella," the "Monowai," and the "Marama," together with the contract vessels of the San Francisco and Vancouver services and the two vessels of the Matson Line. During November and December the "Wanganella" was held up in Australia, and on some occasions advantage was taken of cargo-vessels for the despatch of mails.

The "Waitaki" maintained a service between Bluff and Melbourne during the year, and the "Marama" performed a passenger-service on this route between October and March. The service between Auckland and Suva was maintained by the "Niagara," the "Aorangi," and the "Waipahi," and that between Auckland and Tonga by the "Port Whangarei." The service between New Zealand and Western Samoa was maintained by the steamers of the Matson Line and the "Maui Pomare."

AIR MAILS.

INLAND.

On the 16th March last the first regular air-mail services linking large centres of population were established between Palmerston North and Dunedin and between Nelson, Blenheim, and Wellington. The main service, which is operated by Union Airways of New Zealand, Ltd., has a once-daily frequency in each direction between Palmerston North and Dunedin, with intermediate stops at Blenheim and Christchurch, and the shorter service, operated by Cook Strait Airways, Ltd., has a twice-daily frequency in each direction between Nelson and Wellington and a thrice-daily frequency in each direction between Wellington and Blenheim. Suitable connections between the two services are made at Blenheim.

The rate of postage for inland air-mail correspondence was fixed at 2d. per ounce—i.e., an increase of 1d. per ounce on the ordinary letter-rate. Provision was also made for correspondence addressed to other countries to be given air-despatch in the Dominion at the rate of 1d. per ounce additional to the overseas postage payable.

The air-mail-contract service between Hokitika and the isolated settlements of South Westland, performed by Air Travel (N.Z.), Ltd., was renewed for a further year from the 1st January.