

AIR MAILS.

INLAND.

Further extensions to the air-mail services operating in the Dominion were made on the 27th June, when Union Airways of New Zealand, Ltd., inaugurated a service between Wellington and Auckland with intermediate calls at Palmerston North and New Plymouth, and on the 30th October, when the air service operated by East Coast Airways, Ltd., between Gisborne and Napier was extended to Palmerston North. The time-tables of the Auckland-Wellington and Gisborne - Palmerston North services provide for connections at Palmerston North with the Palmerston North - Dunedin service.

As a result of the extension of the services and the greater public appreciation of the advantages of air-mail transit for correspondence, the volume of traffic has increased considerably. Particulars of the number of letters carried during the last two years are shown hereunder :—

					1936-37.	1937-38.
June quarter	..	..	..	..	179,073	325,584
September quarter	..	..	..	..	215,202	381,019
December quarter	..	..	..	..	256,559	466,813
March quarter	..	..	..	..	283,807	515,225

AUSTRALIA - LONDON SERVICE.

The progressive increase in the number of letters forwarded from New Zealand for despatch by the Australia - London air-mail service has continued. A comparative table showing the volume of mail despatched during the last three years is set out hereunder :—

				Number of Letters.		
				1935-36.	1936-37.	1937-38.
June quarter	..	..	..	35,031	49,933	77,928
September quarter	..	..	..	30,459	48,455	75,474
December quarter	..	..	..	36,520	75,369	100,288
March quarter	..	..	..	35,894	70,780	98,218
Totals	..	..	..	137,904	244,537	351,908

The service operated regularly during the year, the average time taken by mails to Great Britain being seventeen days.

Damage by water was caused to the mail from New Zealand to Great Britain when the flying-boat "Cygnus" crashed at Brindisi on the 5th December. It was possible, however, for the British Post Office to deliver the major portion of the mail.

An experimental flight England - New Zealand - England, via Australia, was made during the year by the Imperial Airways' flying-boat "Centaurus." The flying-boat arrived at Auckland on the 27th December and, after visiting various centres in the Dominion, departed on the return flight on the 10th January.

TRANS-PACIFIC SERVICE.

Following an announcement in December last by Pan-American Airways, Inc., that a regular air service was about to be inaugurated between New Zealand and the United States of America, Government decided that the service was to be used for the carriage of mails from the Dominion. The rates of postage were fixed as follows :—

To	Letters per ½ oz.	Postcards.
	s. d.	s. d.
Pago Pago	0 6	0 3
Hawaii	3 0	1 6
United States (including conveyance on U.S.A. internal air services)	4 6	2 3

On the first air-mail flight from Auckland to Honolulu which was undertaken by the "Samoan Clipper" on the 2nd January last, 25,034 letters weighing 353 lb. 11 oz. were despatched, 15,621 being for delivery in or for onward despatch beyond the United States, 3,526 for Honolulu, and 5,887 for Pago Pago. The United States mail connected at Honolulu with the air-mail service Honolulu - San Francisco.

It was the intention of Pan-American Airways to maintain the service at fortnightly intervals between Auckland, Pago Pago, Kingman Reef, and Honolulu, connecting there with the air-mail service to San Francisco, but the unfortunate loss of the "Samoan Clipper" near American Samoa while on the return journey to New Zealand on the 12th January necessitated the suspension of the service. The company has indicated, however, that the service will be resumed as early as possible.

As the United States and its possessions did not use the service for the carriage of mails, no mail was on board the "Samoan Clipper" at the time the flying-boat was lost.