

and if not prepaid must be charged double the deficient postage. Mail-carriers are not allowed to make any charge beyond the postage for conveying letters handed to them for posting by settlers at a distance more than one mile from a post-office. Mail-contractors on rural deliveries may accept letters for delivery *en route*, provided the postage is fully prepaid. To enable them to cancel the stamps, they will be supplied with ink-pencils by Chief Postmasters. This rule applies also to letters posted on board steamers and delivered on the voyage at places where there is no post-office. (See Rule 366.)

286. Mail-contractors are required to provide free passages for departmental Inspectors travelling on duty. For other officers passage-orders are to be issued. In all cases in which more than one line of vehicles runs over a mail-service route, officers travelling on the public service are to travel by the mail-contractor's vehicles. Controlling officers should see that before leaving his station an officer required to travel is acquainted with the name of the mail-contractor where necessary.

287. To obviate the necessity of drivers of mail vehicles leaving their vehicles whilst receiving or delivering mails, it is the wish of the Postmaster-General that Postmasters meet the vehicles and deliver to and receive from the drivers all mails, except at starting and terminal offices, railway-stations, and, in the case of horse vehicles, wherever there is a change of horses.

RURAL DELIVERIES.

288. For general rural delivery regulations see the Guide.

289. (a.) All rural delivery-boxes are to be purchased through the Department. They will be stencilled free of cost with the names and addresses of the holders.

(b.) The boxes on rural deliveries are to be numbered consecutively; each delivery is to be numbered separately, beginning at 1.

290. The District Engineers at Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin hold stocks of rural-delivery boxes, and Chief Postmasters in the districts of these Engineers will send to the Engineers requisitions for boxes required. Chief Postmasters in the district of the District Telegraph Engineer, Wellington, are to forward their requisitions to the Stores Manager, Wellington. Requisitions, after approval by the Chief Postmaster, are to be sent to the District Telegraph Engineer or the Stores Manager, who will forward the boxes to the Postmaster. When the cost of a box is brought to charge at a chief office the Chief Postmaster is to inform the District Engineer or the Stores Manager regarding delivery of the box.

291. One rural delivery-box will be forwarded to any permanent Postmaster for use in connection with an existing or proposed rural delivery upon requisition to the District Telegraph Engineer, or, in the case of postal districts within the district of the District Telegraph Engineer, Wellington, to the Stores Manager. This box is to be used as a sample on which orders may be taken. If the Postmaster to whom a sample box has been supplied decides that the necessity for retaining it has ceased to exist, he may either (1) advise the District Telegraph Engineer or the Stores Manager accordingly, or (2) sell the sample. In the latter case the value must be brought to charge in his accounts under the heading "Miscellaneous Receipts," and simultaneously a report of the fact, including the date of the account in which the entry appears, must be made to the District Telegraph Engineer or Stores Manager; and the buyer must be given to understand distinctly that the Department by the sale does not oblige itself to establish a rural delivery.