

MAILS BY SEA.

363. The Post and Telegraph Act deals with the conveyance of mails by sea, and Postmasters must see that its requirements in that respect are complied with.

364. The master or agent of every vessel about to sail is required to give at the post-office timely notice of the intended departure of such vessel. In the case of any alteration in the time of departure, due notice must be given of such alteration. (See section 40 of the Post and Telegraph Act, 1908.)

365. (a.) The master of every vessel arriving at any port in New Zealand at which there is a post-office is obliged to subscribe, as soon as practicable thereafter, a declaration in the prescribed form (section 45 of the Post and Telegraph Act, 1908) that he has delivered to the post-office every mail that was on board his vessel, except such postal packets as are not required by law to be sent by post. Such declaration is to be delivered to the person duly authorized to receive the mails for the post-office. On receipt of the declaration the necessary certificate must be issued to the master, and the declaration immediately handed to the Customs Department. As shipmasters may not always be provided with the declaration form, care must be taken that a supply is carried at all times by the messenger, mail-carrier, or shipping officer, who must see that he receives the declaration with the way-bills.

(b.) Any master failing to make the declaration referred to in the foregoing rule, or making a false declaration, is liable to a fine not exceeding £100. But in cases of ferry services and other regular services in which times of arrival and departure are well known to Post officers, and it is therefore safe, and conducive to economy of time and labour, to dispense with any or all of the formalities required by section 45 of the Act, the protection afforded by that section to the Post Office in the despatch of its business may be dispensed with in whole or in part, if the Collector of Customs or his representative raises no objection to dispensing with the Post Office certificate of clearance. But no master of a vessel may claim this exemption as a right at any time.

366. Letters may be posted on board steamers for delivery on the voyage at places where there is no post-office. To enable him to cancel the stamps the purser or other responsible officer of the steamer is to be supplied with an ink-pencil.

DESPATCH OF INLAND MAILS.

367. The time-table of the ordinary departure of local mails is to be posted up outside the office for public information.

368. (a.) It is an essential part of a Postmaster's duty, before despatching a mail, to see that the contents have been treated in accordance with the regulations. He should satisfy himself that every article requiring to be date-stamped bears a clear and legible impression of his office stamp; that the restrictions as to size, weight, and contents are in no case infringed; that the postage-stamps have been carefully defaced, and that none of them have been previously used; that the registered articles have been properly dealt with, and the unpaid and insufficiently paid articles duly charged; and that the proper parcel-receptacles have been provided. The re-use by the Criminal Registration Branch of the Police Department of envelopes addressed to that branch from local offices is not to be challenged, conditionally on old date-stamp impressions being effectually deleted.

(b.) When the postal packets have been thus examined and prepared they must be sorted for despatch by the respective mails.