

## The 1889 CAUTION Label

by Stephen F Prest

### Introduction

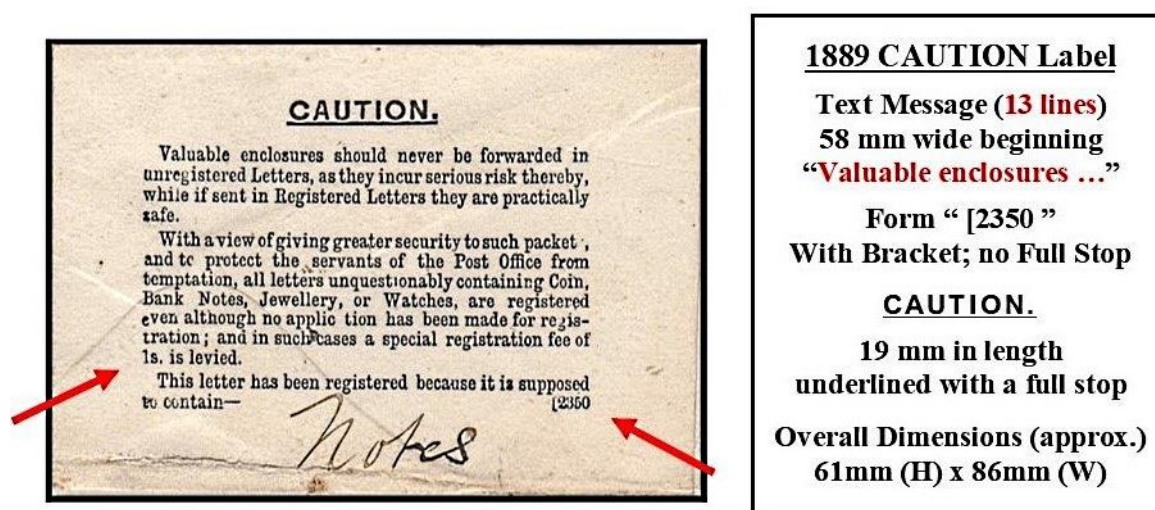
The Post Office introduced Compulsory Registration from 1 August 1862 for articles mailed within New Zealand by ordinary means but were thought to contain valuables such as coins, banknotes etc. by Officers handling such items in transit <sup>(1)</sup>.

By the late 1880's the Post Office had introduced the practice of affixing a "CAUTION" label to the back of the envelope subject to Compulsory Registration. Officers were instructed to mark such letters "Compulsorily Registered" and surcharge the article double deficiency for both the ruling registration fee and any other insufficiently paid fees.

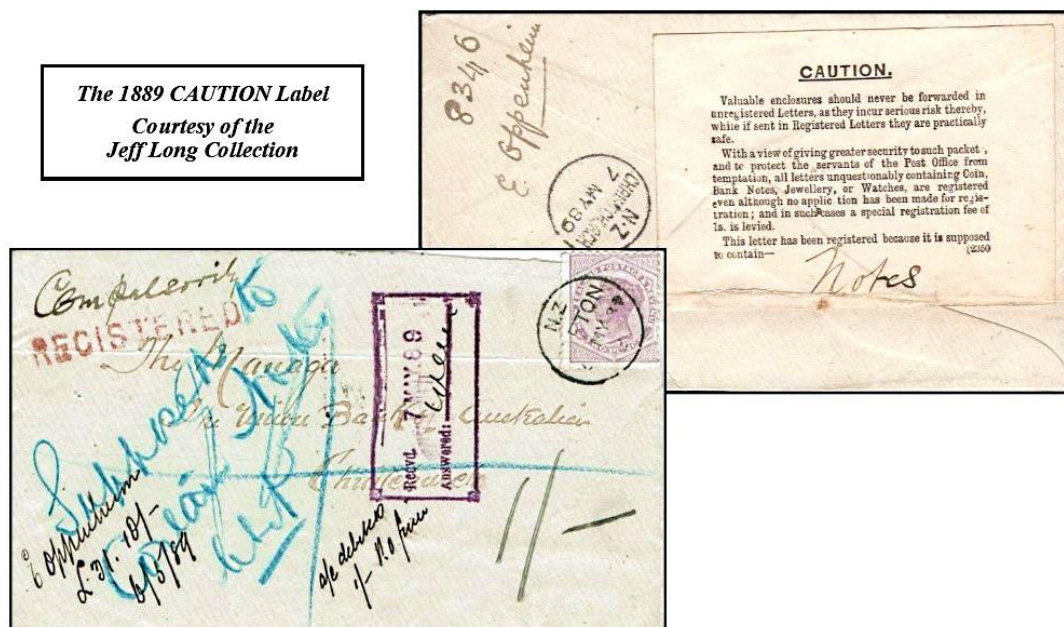
An article published in the July 2017 issue of CAPTAIN COQK described eight variations of CAUTION Labels used by New Zealand post offices during the King George VI and early QE II periods <sup>(2)</sup>. This present article describes a CAUTION Label that first came into use in the late 1880's.

### The 1889 CAUTION Label

The 1889 Label exhibit features 13 lines of text message divided into three paragraphs. The first paragraph explains that valuable items sent through the post should never be forwarded in unregistered letters. The second paragraph informs the letter's recipient that a fee of 1s. is levied (double the then current registration fee of 6d.) in cases where the Post Office has compulsorily registered an unregistered letter which is believed to contain a valuable item. The last paragraph provides space for the registering Post Office to write in manuscript the reason why it has compulsorily registered the letter. A Form identifier "[2350]" appears at the lower right of the message text. Further dimensional details of the 1889 Labels are provided below.



The letter below illustrates the Earliest Known Usage date for the 1889 Caution Label as being 07 May 1889. The letter was thought to contain bank notes which apparently was determined to total £31.10/- by the recipient, the Union Bank of Australia in Christchurch. The cover was duly marked “Compulsorily Registered” and charged 1/- in fees by the Post Office. A manuscript note indicates the depositor’s bank account was debited 1/- for “P.O. Fines”.



***Earliest Known Use of the 1889 CAUTION Label*** (Type [2350 - Bracket and no Full Stop] affixed to a letter containing Notes - Postmarked 06 May 1889 (Clifton) but apparently Compulsorily Registered in Christchurch on 07 May 1889

The table below shows the earliest and latest known usage dates for the 1889 Labels.

<b><u>Earliest Known Use of the 1889 CAUTION “ [2350 ” Labels</u></b>		
	Postmark	Route
EKU (Bracket & no Full Stop)	07 MY 89	Clifton to Christchurch
Latest Known Date	31 MR 97	Hororata to Christchurch

***Acknowledgements:*** The author wishes to thank CPS members Jeff Long and Paul Wreglesworth who kindly provided the author images of covers featuring 1889 CAUTION Labels from their respective collections for use in this study.

#### References:

- (1) Rev. A.H. Voyce “New Zealand Registered Mail Markings” Postal History Society NZ, 1971, p. 5
- (2) S. Prest, “The 1932 to 1960 CAUTION Labels – Update 1”, CAPTAIN COOK, Newsletter of the Christchurch (NZ) Philatelic Society, Whole Number 786, Vol 45, No. 6, 2017 pp 92-94

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