

KGVI Period Inland Short-paid Registered Mail - Part 2

Irregularly Posted Inland Registered Letter surcharged Double Deficiency

by Stephen F Prest and Patrick J Skinner

As foreshadowed in Part 1 of this series ⁽¹⁾, the cover illustrated in Figure 1 has been in our “too hard” folder for some time. It depicts a short-paid Inland registered letter mailed in Wellington 2 October 1937 to M. L. Tapley & Co. Ltd. in Dunedin. There are all sorts of markings on the front to consider including a handwritten “*Re-Addressed Registered Correspondence, Urgent*” message penned by the sender, a “*Tax 9d*” in manuscript plus an **IRREGULARLY POSTED** cachet applied by the Post Office. Further, the envelope was subject to compulsory registration in Wellington as evidenced by the **CAUTION.** label on the back (see Figure 2.)



Figure 1. Inland Registered Letter mailed from Wellington 2 October 1937 charged 9d. in Postage Due on arrival in Dunedin 11 October 1937

A review of the 1922 “Rules and Regulations” handbook ⁽²⁾ revealed that this letter contravened postal regulations on a number of levels. First, Rule 454, which reads in part as shown below, clearly states that redirected letters must not be enclosed in new covers in the manner done by the sender of the letter shown above.

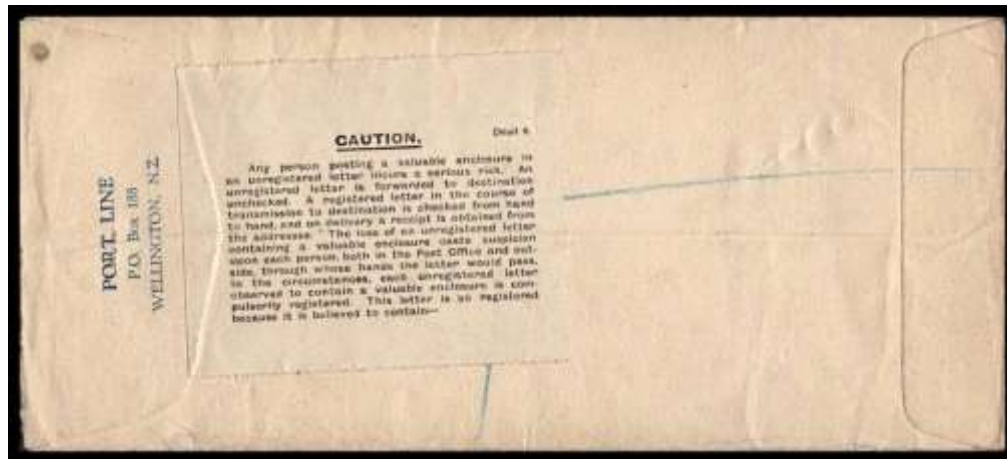
454. *Redirected letters must not be enclosed in new covers. They must be clearly redirected in red ink on the original covers, the old address being ruled through.*

It would appear that the sender must have dropped the envelope into a post box or left it on the counter in Wellington without advising Post Office staff. Otherwise, if he had submitted the envelope over the counter, stamps would have been affixed to the cover to pay the postage and registration fee. As it was, the letter was duly marked as being irregularly posted in accordance with Rule 551 (a.)

551. (a.) *A letter addressed to any place within or beyond New Zealand marked “Registered,” but not entered on the list or letter-bill or marked in blue pencil, must, when discovered, be registered and treated as not having been duly tendered for registration, and both receipt and cover of letter marked “Irregularly posted”. Any such letter not fully prepaid, including the registration fee, must be surcharged double the deficiency.*

In fact, when it comes to redirected registered articles, Rule 570 clearly states that this must be processed over the counter and not via reposting in a post box.

570. A registered article which ... may be redirected unopened and reposted in the posting-box of any office, must be treated as irregularly posted and charged double registration fee, but not the second postage.



*Figure 2. Compulsory Registration **CAUTION.** label affixed to the back of the Registered Letter mailed from Wellington 2 October 1937*

The final mystery about this cover is: what exactly was the basis for determining the 9d. surcharge? Under Rule 551, the 9d. would equate to 4½ doubled which would be the rate for a registered letter weighing between 1 to 2 ounces in 1937. But what of the airmail etiquette affixed to the envelope? It is unlikely the sender would have placed it there although the original letter inside the envelope may well have been sent by airmail. Maybe the Wellington Post Office affixed the airmail label but, on the other hand, it did take 9 days between registration and acceptance in Dunedin, which is quite long delivery period for an “Urgent” article.

As is often the case with short-paid mail, the answer may never be fully determined but if any of our fellow Mail Coach readers have other suggestions, we would be pleased as always to hear from them.

References:

- (1) “KGVI Period Inland Short-paid Registered Mail – Part 1”, The Mail Coach, Vol. 52 No. 2, Whole No. 400 (December 2015) p.
- (2) “Rules and Regulations for the Guidance of Officers (General and Postal), by the New Zealand Post and Telegraph Department, Publisher, the Government Printer, 1922

Footnote: The authors have assembled various references to the rules and regulations pertaining to Registered-Letter mail in a summary document for future reference. This document can be made available to members of the Society by contacting the authors either by email at stephen.prest@gmail.com locating it via the Topics & Research / Registered Mail links on the New Zealand King George VI website at www.kgvi.co.nz or through the kind auspices of our Editor.