

King George VI – New Zealand The Half Penny Issues & Postal Rates

A Study Paper

Section 1 - Half Penny Postal Rates



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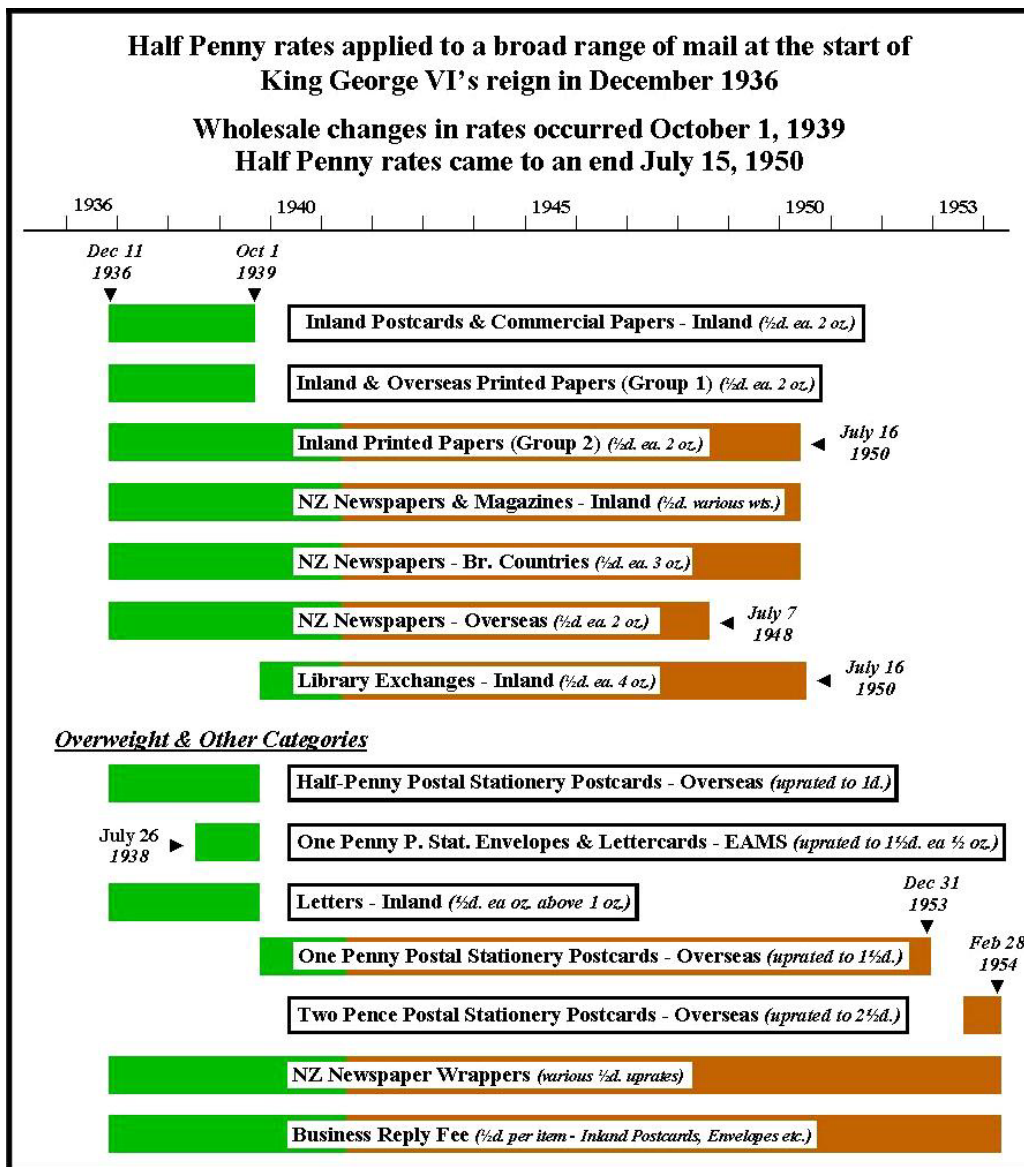
Section 1 Half Penny Postal Rates

1.1 Half Penny Postal Rates - December 11, 1936

A review of the 1937 New Zealand Post & Telegraph Department Guide⁽¹⁾ revealed that half penny rates applied to Inland Postcards and a range of second class mail in mid 1937. A further review of *Post & Telegraph Official Circulars* for the period December 1936 to June 1937⁽²⁾ did not reveal any changes in postal rates in that period. It is concluded therefore that the rates appearing in the 1937 Guide were those in force on December 11, 1936 and these are summarized in Appendix 1, Table 1.1 and illustrated in Figure 1.1 below.

For most of the George VI Period, transmission of Registered Newspapers (defined in Appendix 1, Table 1.1) to British countries enjoyed a reduced rate relative to other Overseas destinations (see Appendix 2 for a listing of British countries).

Figure 1.1 Half Penny Postal Rates during the George VI Period



1.2 Introduction of the "All-up" Empire Air Mail Service - July 26, 1938

The rate for Letters to Great Britain and other Empire countries including Egypt and Iraq (but excluding Australia and New Guinea) became 1½d. per ½ oz. upon New Zealand's entry into the "All-up" Empire Air Mail Service⁽³⁾ (see Appendix 2). This service remained in effect until September 4, 1939⁽⁴⁾ when air services were interrupted due to commencement of hostilities in Europe and the Middle East. The Empire rate remained 1½d. however until September 30, 1939 as alternate arrangements were made for delivery via surface transport, circumstances permitting⁽⁵⁾.

During this period from July 28, 1938 to end September 1939, regular issue on penny postal stationery Lettercards and Envelopes sent to Great Britain and other Empire destinations would have required a ½d. postage stamp be affixed to make up the 1½d. "All-up" Empire Air Mail Service rate. Examples of such usage appear to be relatively scarce.

The Postcard rate for Empire destinations remained 1d. as of July 26, 1938⁽⁶⁾. It is unclear whether Postcards for Empire destinations continued to be forwarded by ordinary surface means or were included, as a matter of course, in the "All-up Empire Air Mail Scheme" dispatches.

1.3 Postal Rates Changes - October 1, 1939

The Post & Telegraph Department announced various postal rate increases effective October 1, 1939⁽⁷⁾. Pertinent half penny rates that came into effect October 1, 1939 are summarized in Appendix 1, Table 1.2. In general, half penny rates for Postcards, overweight letter categories and most Commercial, Packet and Printed Paper categories fell away at this time. This had the effect of greatly reducing the use of half penny stamps from October 1939 onwards which, in turn, had important implications in terms of Post & Telegraph Department planning.

The **1939 Post and Telegraph Department Annual Report to the House of Representatives**⁽⁸⁾ stated that mail categories having a minimum rate of ½d. totalled some 130 million pieces in 1938 (or about 13 million pieces per month) comprising Commercial Papers at 101 million (the most important category); then Newspapers (inc. Printed Papers) at 19 million, Packets at 9 million and Postcards at 4 million. The rate changes in October 1939 resulted in a reduction in mail qualifying for the minimum ½d. rate to about ten percent of the 1938 monthly average.

Printed Papers were sub-divided as of October 1, 1939 into two groups⁽⁷⁾ as shown below. The pre-October 1939 rate of ½d. each 2 oz. or fraction thereof was retained for Group 2 Printed Papers while those for Group 1 were increased to 1d. for the first 4 oz. and ½d. each additional 2 oz. The terms, Group 1 and Group 2, are the authors' designation for convenience as there is no evidence in the notice of change printed in the October 16, 1939 edition of the **Post & Telegraph Official Circular** that any particular terminology was employed to distinguish between the two categories other than the use of the word "Other" to describe Group 2 Inland Printed Papers.

Inland Printed Papers - (Group 1) include greeting and visiting cards etc., notices of meetings and notices generally; invitations; non-advertising circulars; photographs; printed music; voting papers; postage Stamps (obliterated); Post Guide Company letters...

Other Inland Printed Papers - (Group 2) include other printed papers including all printed advertising matter, books, periodicals, catalogues, price-lists, newspapers and magazines printed overseas, and unregistered newspapers and magazines printed in New Zealand.

However they were identified as Printed Papers (i) and (ii) in **The Post Office Guide 1944**⁽⁹⁾. The description of Groups (i) and (ii) varied slightly from the 1939 descriptions and are reproduced in Appendix 1, Table 1.2.

1.3 Postal Rates Changes - October 1, 1939 (cont'd)

The Fee for Business Reply Postcards, Envelopes and Wrappers remained ½d. plus the normal postage for the particular mail category returned to the originator. Of note, the ½d. fee for this service remained unaltered during the entire duration of the George VI Period.

In respect to Newspapers and Magazines, the changes introduced in October 1939 resulted in relatively minor increases in postal rates for Inland categories. The rate was set at ½d. the first 3 oz., ½d. each 3 additional oz. for Newspapers forwarded to for British countries while the rate to other Overseas destinations remained unchanged at ½d. the first 2 oz., ½d. each 2 additional oz. The rate for Magazines was set at the new Group 1 Printed Papers rate of 1d. the first 4 oz., ½d. each 2 additional oz. to all Overseas destinations including British countries.

Standing out as an exception to the general rule, the rate for Library Exchanges was set in October 1939 at ½d. for each 4 ounces, a reduction from the former rate of 2d. for each 1 lb. established in 1931.

1.4 Postal Rates Changes - July 8, 1948

The Post & Telegraph Department announced minor changes to postal rates for Newspapers and Magazines July 8, 1948⁽¹⁰⁾ for Inland delivery where the rate became ½d. for the first 2 oz. versus 4 oz. previously. The rate for Registered Newspapers to British countries remained unchanged at ½d. the first 3 oz., ½d. each 3 additional oz.

The most important rate change in 1948 was for Registered Newspapers to other Overseas destinations which was set at the same as the rate for Unregistered Newspapers and Magazines of 1d. for the first 2 oz., ½d. each 2 additional oz.

Various half penny postage rates effective July 7, 1948 are summarized in Appendix 1, Table 1.3.

1.5 Postal Rates Changes - July 16, 1950 & March 1, 1952

The changes in postal rates announced July 16, 1950⁽¹¹⁾ saw the end of mail service for a base fee of one half penny in New Zealand. Half penny stamps were still required however to make up various overweight categories and to pay the Business Reply Fee as shown in Appendix 1, Table 1.4. Half Penny Postal Stationery Newspaper Wrappers in particular were, by necessity, uprated with half penny stamps to utilize existing stocks.

It has been reported in **The Postage Stamps of New Zealand - Volume IX** that the rate charged on Department of Education "Progress Report" Postal Stationery Envelopes increased on March 1, 1952 from 1d. to 1½d.⁽¹²⁾ A review of the **1952 Post Office Official Circulars** did not confirm the date of this increase which remains a matter for further study as of this writing.

1.6 Postal Rates Changes - January 1, 1953

The Post & Telegraph Department introduced a number of changes in base rates for various postal services on January 1, 1953⁽¹³⁾. As was the case with the July 1950 rate changes, the fee for a number of overweight categories remained one half penny as of January 1, 1953 as shown in Appendix 1, Table 1.5.

Considerable planning went into the announcement of the rate increases scheduled for January 1, 1953. A confidential "talking points" memorandum was circulated to senior Post Office officials towards the end of November 1952 which outlined the reasons and justifications underlying the rate increases planned for January, 1953⁽¹⁴⁾.

1.7 Postal Rates Changes - July 1, 1953

Postage rates for postcards to Overseas destinations increased 3d. Single; 6d. Reply on January 1, 1953. In June, the Post and Telegraph Department announced that the rate for Overseas postcards would be reduced to 2½d. Single; 5d. Reply as of July 1, 1953 as a consequence of the adoption of the Postal Union Convention of Brussels⁽¹⁵⁾.

These were the last changes to be made in half penny rates prior to February 28, 1954, the conclusion of the George VI Period in New Zealand philately.

Bibliography - Section 1 Half Penny Postal Rates

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- (3) P&T Official Circular Vol LV, No. 8 (August 16, 1938) p. 56
- (4) The Airmails of New Zealand, Volume Two, The Overseas Flights 1928-1940 (Air Mail Society of New Zealand) 1986, p. 303
- (5) P&T Official Circular Vol LVI, No. 9 (September 16, 1939) p. 60
- (6) The New Zealand Official Year Book - 1939; Forty Seventh Edition, Government Printer (1939) p. 275
- (7) P&T Official Circular Vol LVI, No. 10 (October 16, 1939) pp. 70-71
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- (12) The Postage Stamps of New Zealand, Volume IX, 2006 RPSNZ Inc, Wellington NZ p. 241
- (13) New Zealand Post Office Circular (1953), No. 2 (February 2, 1953) p. 18
- (14) "Post Office rates and charges increases", (P&T Internal Memo) No. P. & T. 1952/3534, (November 25, 1952)
- (15) New Zealand Post Office Circular (1953), No. 12 (June 16, 1953) p. 101