

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

*A Study Paper*

## **Section 5 Use of Half Penny Stamps to uprate Postal Stationery**



*by*

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**February 2010**

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## **Section 5   Use of Half Penny Stamps to uprate Postal Stationery**

New Zealand's postal stationery was first and foremost primarily designed to prepay Inland postal rates. Newspaper wrappers were an exception in that they also prepaid the rates to Overseas destinations throughout most of the George VI Period. Half penny postal stationery postcards on the other hand required the addition of a half penny stamp to pay the Overseas Postcard rate. Generally other classes of postal stationery also required adhesive stamps to be affixed for Overseas mail.

Secondly, one of the consequences of changing postal rates is that the printed stamps appearing on various classes of postal stationery invariably were no longer sufficient to pay the required rate for the service they were intended. Meanwhile, post offices (and the general public) would have stocks of Envelopes, Postcards etc., in hand and would, as a matter of economy, wish to utilize these stocks by adding sufficient additional postage in the form of adhesive stamps to pay the new higher rates. Further, as was the case of the October 1939 rate increases for example, the decision to implement new postal rates was sometimes made on relatively short notice making it impractical to have ready supplies of postal stationery with the new rates on the dates these rates took effect.

The result flowing from these circumstances was that most postal stationery issued during the George VI Period required additional postage stamps to be added during the interregna between the effective date of the new rates and the issue date of the next generation of postal stationery.

The half penny stamps played an important role in meeting these requirements. This Section explores numerous categories of mail where a half penny stamp was used to uprate postal stationery during the George VI Period.

### **5.1 Postcards to Overseas Destinations (December 11, 1936 - September 30, 1939)**

The Postcard rate for all Overseas destinations was 1d. during the December 1936 to September 1939 period. Half penny postal stationery postcards required a half penny stamp affixed to meet this rate. There were three combinations of in period use of the half penny postal stationery postcards and half penny stamps during this time as illustrated in Table 5.1.

Examples of uprated 1935 Half Penny Fantail Postcards to meet the 1d. Overseas rate are difficult to obtain. Examples of 1939 Half Penny George VI Postcard uprated to the Overseas and used in period are rare.

| <b><i>Table 5.1 Postal Stationery Postcards uprated for Overseas Destinations<br/>December 11, 1936 - September 30, 1939</i></b> |                                 |                             |                            |
|--|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b><u>In Period Use between:</u></b>   | <b><u>Postal Stationery</u></b> | <b><u>Postage Stamp</u></b> | <b><u>Availability</u></b> |
| Dec 11, 1936 - Feb 28, 1938  | ½d. Fantail Postcard            | ½d. Fantail                 | Difficult                  |
| Mar 1, 1938 - July 24, 1939  | ½d. Fantail Postcard            | ½d. George VI Green         | Difficult                  |
| July 24, to Sept 30, 1939  | ½d. George VI Postcard          | ½d. George VI Green         | Rare                       |

**5.1 Postcards to Overseas Destinations (December 11, 1936 - September 30, 1939 cont'd)**



**Fig. 5.1 1935 Half Penny Fantail Postcard uprated with a 1935 ½d. Fantail stamp to pay the 1d. Overseas Postcard rate**  
**Posted from Umutoi to Shanghai, China**  
**August 8, 1937**

**Fig. 5.2 1935 Half Penny Fantail Postcard uprated with a 1935 ½d. Fantail stamp to pay the 1d. Empire Postcard rate**  
**Posted from Auckland to**  
**Kyancutta, South Australia**  
**December 23, 1937**



**5.2 Lettercards & Envelopes via the Empire Air Mail Service (July 26, 1938 - Sept 30, 1939)**

New Zealand became a participant in the “All-up” Empire Air Mail Service (EAMS) effective July 26, 1938 (see Section 1.2). The new rate for all letters to the Great Britain and other British countries that participated in the service became 1½d. per ½ ounce or fraction thereof. Letters sent from New Zealand via the EAMS did not require any special markings or labels indicating the letter was to be sent “Airmail”.

The Post & Telegraph Official Circular issued September 16, 1939 indicated that letters to British Empire destinations by air mail was now 1s. 6d. <sup>(1)</sup>. The September 1939 Official Circular goes on to state:

*“All correspondence paid at the rate 1½d. for each half-ounce will be forwarded by surface transport as opportunity offers. This rate - 1½d. each half-ounce - remains unaltered.”*

It would seem from this statement that the Post & Telegraph Department were mindful of the general increase in rates that were about to come into effect October 1, 1939 where surface letters to British Empire destinations would become 2d. for the first half ounce, and 1d. for each additional half ounce thereafter <sup>(2)</sup>. Given these circumstances, there was little point in returning to the former Empire rate for surface transport of 1d. for each ounce or fraction thereof thereafter that had prevailed prior to the introduction of the EAMS. So, while air transport of letters via the EAMS at the 1½d. per ½ ounce rate ceased in early September, in fact mail forwarded to Empire destinations by surface means would still require payment of the 1½d. fee which remained in effect through September 30, 1939.

## 5.2 Lettercards & Envelopes via the EAMS (July 26, 1938 - Sept 30, 1939 cont'd)

During this (EAMS) period, there were two postal stationery lettercards in current use, the 1935 1d. Kiwi Lettercard up to May 4, 1939 and the 1939 1d. George VI Lettercard, issued May 5, 1939 for the balance of the period (September 30, 1939) <sup>(3)</sup>. There were also four postal stationery envelopes in current use during this period, the 1936 1d. George V Envelopes until November 1938 (Commercial and Social sizes produced using the 1d. Australian Note and Stamp Printer Die <sup>(4)</sup>) and the 1938 1d. George VI Envelopes (Commercial and Social sizes) thereafter to September 1939.

The adoption of the EAMS meant that postal users of these Lettercards and Envelopes would need to affix a ½d. GVI Green stamp to make up the 1½d. EAMS rate. Examples of these uprated One Penny Lettercards and Envelopes appear to be quite scarce and, in the case of the social sized Envelopes, there may well be no surviving examples if indeed they ever existed in the first place.

At present, the authors have not seen any example among the six possible half penny postal stationery/half penny stamp combinations discussed above and listed in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2 One Penny Postal Stationery Lettercards & Envelopes uprated for delivery via the "All-up" Empire Air Mail Service (July 26, 1938 - September 30, 1939)**

| <u>In Period Use between:</u> | <u>Postal Stationery</u>         | <u>Postage Stamp</u> | <u>Availability</u> |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| July 26, 1938 - May 4, 1939   | 1d. Kiwi Lettercard              | ½d. George VI Green  | Difficult           |
| May 5, 1939, to Sept 1939     | 1d. George VI Lettercard         | ½d. George VI Green  | Scarce              |
| July 26, 1938 - Nov 1938      | 1d. George V Commercial Envelope | ½d. George VI Green  | Scarce              |
| July 26, 1938 - Nov 1938      | 1d. George V Social Envelope     | ½d. George VI Green  | Existence ???       |
| Nov 1938 - Sept 1939          | 1d George VI Commercial Envelope | ½d. George VI Green  | Scarce              |
| Nov 1938 - Sept 1939          | 1d George VI Social Envelope     | ½d. George VI Green  | Existence ???       |

## 5.3 Uprated Inland Half Penny Postcards (October 1, 1939 - February 1940)

With the change in postal rates October 1, 1939, The Post & Telegraph Department found itself with a substantial stock of 1939 Half Penny George VI Postcards on hand. Many were returned to the Government Printing Office to be overprinted "ONE PENNY" which were first released in February 1940 <sup>(5)</sup>. In the intervening five month period, it is thought that post offices pre-affixed 1938 ½d. GVI Green stamps to postcards prior to sale to the public as shown in the example found in Fig 5.3.



**Fig. 5.3 1939 Half Penny George VI Postcard uprated with a 1938 ½d. George VI Green stamp to pay the 1d. Inland Postcard rate**  
  
**Posted from the Centennial Tower, to Wellington February 6, 1940**



**5.4 Uprated Inland Half Penny Postcards (February 1940 - December 31, 1952)**

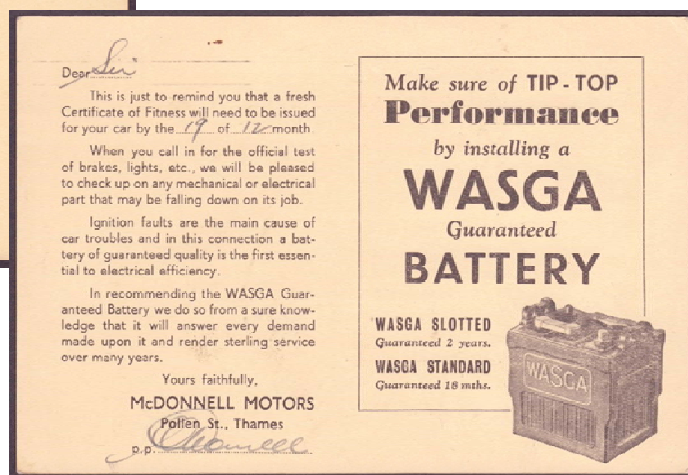
Many New Zealand businesses arranged to have printed messages on the reverse of both the 1935 Half Penny Fantail and the 1939 George VI Postcards. Once produced, firms would continue to use them well into the 1940's as stocks allowed. The example shown in Fig 5.4 is a 1935 Half Penny Fantail Postcard uprated with a 1941 ½d. GVI Brown stamp mailed in late 1947.

There are eight possible combinations of the four half penny stamps on issue between February 1940 and December 1952 and the two half penny postcards of the George VI Period. Collecting examples of these and identification of commercial and other clients who arranged for printed messages to be placed on the reverse is substantial study in its own right and outside the scope of this Study Paper



**Fig. 5.4 1935 Half Penny Fantail Postcard uprated with a 1941 ½d. George VI Brown stamp to pay the 1d. Inland Postcard rate  
Posted within Thames late 1947**

**Fig. 5.4 (Reverse) Postcard Message printed for McDonnell Motors of Thames advising Mr. Teasdale that his Certificate of Fitness will need to be renewed by December 19th (1947)**



**5.5 Uprated Department of Education Half Penny Postcards (October 1, 1939 - 1940)**

With the change in postal rates October 1, 1939, the Department of Education needed to uprate stocks of the Half Penny Fantail Official Postcards in hand. Arrangements were made with the Government Printer to overprint "1d" on the previously overprinted "Official" half penny cards. which are thought to have become available sometime in 1940. During the interregnum, these Official postcards were uprated with half penny stamps examples of which are considered to be quite scarce.

**Fig. 5.5 1935 Half Penny Fantail "Official" Postal Stationery Department of Education Postcard uprated with a 1938 ½d. George VI Green stamp to pay the 1d. Inland Postcard rate  
Posted from Te Awamutu to Pirongia July 5, 1941**



*Courtesy of Mr. Stephen D. Schumann*

### **5.6 Postcards to Overseas Destinations (February 1940 - December 31, 1952)**

The Overseas Postcard rate (conveyed via surface means) was 1½d. to all Overseas destinations from October 1, 1939 to December 31, 1952. The first postal stationery postcards denominated at the 1d. rate appeared February 1940 as the overprinted “ONE PENNY” on the 1939 Half Penny George VI Postcard. In March 1940, postcards appeared with the stamp printed in carmine with One Penny George VI die. Thereafter, commencing with printings issued in March 1941, the One Penny George VI Postcard was issued with the stamp printed in green for the balance of the period.

Examples of the February and March 1940 One Penny George VI Postcards uprated with a George VI Period half penny stamp are difficult New Zealand postal history items. Examples of the March 1941 One Penny George VI Green Postcard uprated to meet the Overseas Postcard rate are more common due to the longevity of its issue.



*Fig. 5.6 1941 One Penny George VI Green Postcard uprated with a 1940 ½d. Centennial to pay the 1½d. Overseas Postcard rate  
Posted from Auckland to Fawley Buckinghamshire, England  
December 10, 1943*

### **5.7 Uprated Department of Education Envelopes (March 1, 1952 - February 28, 1954)**

Department of Education “SCHOOL PROGRESS CARDS” Envelopes were charged at a variety of different rates during the George VI Period as shown in Table 5.3 below. The authors are unaware of the reasons for the changes in classification during the period and this is an area that would reward further research.

| <b><i>Table 5.3 Department of Education Envelopes - Rates during the George VI Period</i></b> |                    |   |
|---|--------------------|---|
| <b><u>Effective Dates</u></b>   | <b><u>Rate</u></b> | <b><u>Equivalent Inland Rate Category</u></b> |
| December 11, 1936 - September 30, 1939  | 1d.                | Inland Letter Rate                            |
| October 1, 1939 - February 29, 1952   | 1d.                | Printed Papers Rate                           |
| March 1, 1952 - December 31, 1952   | 1½d.               | Commercial Papers Rate                        |
| January 1, 1953??? - February 28, 1954  | 2d.                | Commercial Papers and Postcard Rates          |

The ruling Commercial Papers rate was applied to these envelopes as of March 1, 1952. In February 1952, some 85,000 existing 1d. School Progress Cards Envelopes were uprated to 1½d. by printing a ½d. stamp alongside of the 1d. Stamp<sup>(6)</sup>. Further printings of these envelopes with the 1½d. configuration took place in April and May 1952. In total, some 140,000 of these envelopes were prepared, sufficient stock to permit their use for a considerable period of time into the future.

**5.7 Upated Department of Education Envelopes (March 1, 1952 - February 28, 1954 cont'd)**

Given the ready availability of these postal stationery envelopes already pre-stamped at the required 1½d. rate, there was little need for users to uprate 1d. Envelopes with an additional ½d. stamp during the period March to December 1952. The authors are unaware of the existence of a 1d. Department of Education Envelope uprated with a separate ½d. stamp during this period.

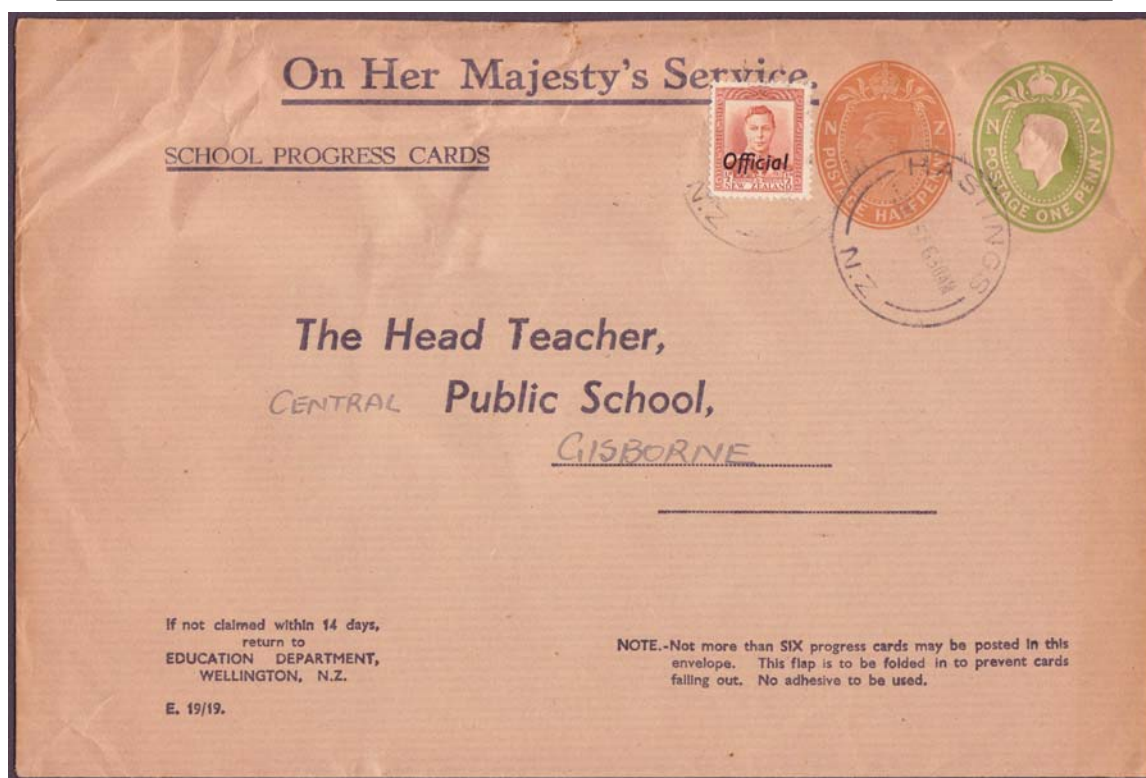
A major change in New Zealand postal rates occurred January 1, 1953 when the base Inland Commercial Papers and Postcard rates were increased to 2d. Charges for Department of Education Official Postcards, and it would appear, the "SCHOOL PROGRESS CARDS" Envelopes were also raised to 2d. to follow suit.

Notes in **The Postage Stamps of New Zealand - Volume IX** infer that this changeover to the 2d. rate for the 1952 1½d. Department of Education Envelopes occurred on or after May 1953 following the overprinting of some 62,000 these envelopes in that month with the single word "TWO PENCE" <sup>(6)</sup>. However, one example of the 1952 1½d. DoE Envelope uprated to 2d with a ½d. meter stamp (Permit No. 2354) and postmarked in Dunedin is illustrated in Volume IX.

The authors have two further examples in their collection, one, a mint copy of 1952 1½d. DoE Envelope with a ½d. meter stamp (Permit No. 2354) added and, a second, the example shown in Fig 5.7 which has a 1941 ½d. GVI Brown Official stamp affixed and was posted in Hastings on May 3, 1954. These three examples would indicate that, in addition to the TWO PENCE overprinted Envelopes of 1953, some 1952 1½d. Department of Education Envelopes were uprated with a ½d. stamp by local school authorities.

This finding brings into question when the change of rate for these envelopes actually occurred; around May 1953 as suggested in **The Postage Stamps of New Zealand - Volume IX** or on January 1, 1953 in concert with the change in rate for Department of Education Postcards. Clearly this remains an subject deserving of further research as time permits.

*Figure 5.7 1952 Half Penny plus One Penny Department of Education Envelope uprated with a 1941 ½d. George VI Official stamp to pay the 2d. rate  
Posted from Hastings to Gisborne May 3, 1954*

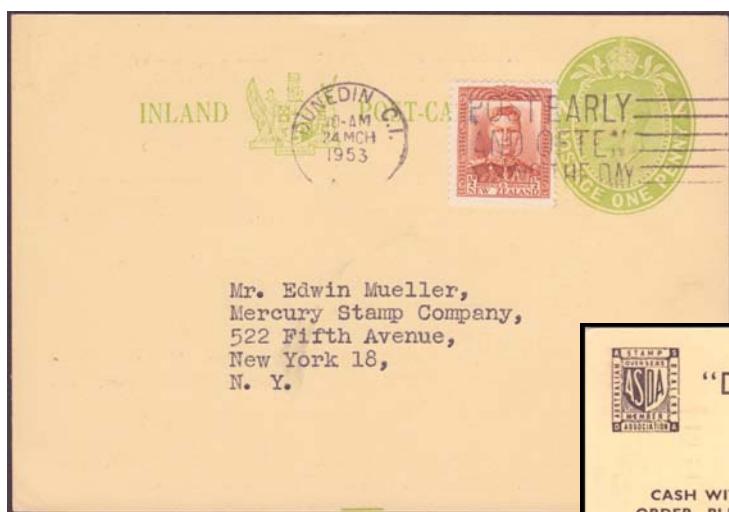




**5.8 Uprated One Penny Postcards as Printed Matter (January 1, 1953 - February 28, 1954)**

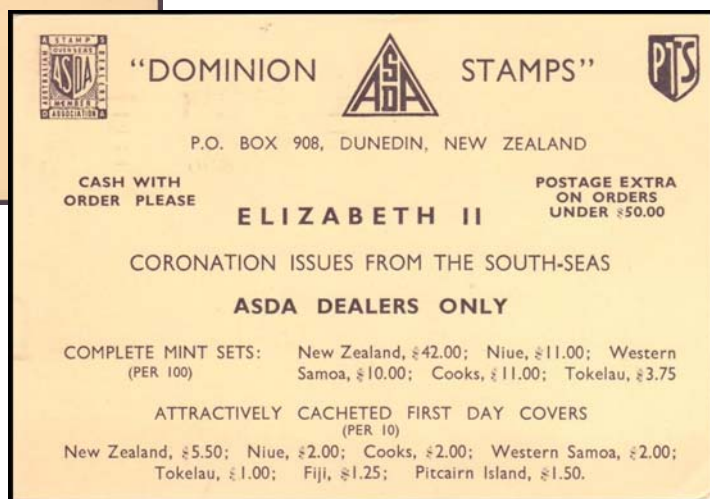
Postage rates for Inland Printed Papers were raised to 1½d. first 4 ounces, ½d. ea. 2 ounces thereafter on January 1, 1953. This change meant that one penny postal stationery postcards with a printed reverse were now to be charged the new 1½d. rate and therefore would need to be uprated with a half penny stamp.

Postcards categorized as Printed Papers forwarded to Overseas destinations were charged 1½d. first 2 ounces, ½d. ea. 2 ounces from January 1, 1953. The 1941 ½d. GVI Brown was the only half penny stamp on issue from post offices during the late stages of the George VI Period. Fig 5.8 below illustrates an example of a postcard sent as printed papers to the USA after the January 1, 1953 rate increases.



*Fig. 5.8 1941 1d. George VI Postcard uprated with a ½d. George VI Brown stamp to pay the 1½d. Printed Papers rate  
Posted from Dunedin to New York City  
March 24, 1953*

*Fig. 5.8 (Reverse) Postcard Message printed for Dominion Stamps of Dunedin advising availability of various philatelic items*



**5.9 Postcards to Overseas Destinations (July 1, 1953 - February 28, 1954)**

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 (*see Section 1.7*).

There were two 2d. George VI postal stationery postcards issued in January 1953 to meet the requirements for postcards mailed to Inland destinations. The first, issued January 7, 1953 was the 2d. overprint on the 1941 One Penny George VI Green Postcard. The second, the 1953 Two Pence George VI Orange Postcard, was issued January 21, 1953. Both of these postcards would have required a 1941 ½d. GVI Brown stamp affixed to make the Overseas Postcard rate of 2½ that came into effect July 1, 1953.

The authors have not seen an example of these combinations as of this writing and given the relatively brief eight month period before the end of the George VI Period, it is thought that obtaining suitable in period examples may prove difficult.

**5.10 Newspapers to Overseas Destinations (July 8, 1948 - December 31, 1952)**

Minimum postage rates increased from ½d. to 1d. for the first 2 ounces for newspapers mailed to Overseas destinations as of July 8, 1948. The wrapper illustrated in Fig 5.9 shows a 1949-50 ½d. George VI Brown Wrapper uprated with a 1941 ½d. GVI Brown stamp to make up the new rate for a wrapper forwarded to the United States. The identification of the wrapper as being the 1949-50 printing (straight line instruction panel and the word “be” omitted from the third line of text), allows one to discount the possibility that the half penny stamp was paying an overweight fee that might have applied had the wrapper been mailed prior to July 8, 1948.



*Fig. 5.9 1949-50 Half Penny George VI Wrapper uprated with a 1941 ½d. George VI Brown to pay the 1d. Overseas Newspaper (Registered) rate  
Posted from Hamilton to San Antonio, Texas  
circ 1949-52*

**5.11 Newspapers to Inland & Br. Countries Destinations (July 16, 1950 - December 31, 1952)**

Minimum postage rates increased from ½d. to 1d. for the first 2 ounces for newspapers mailed to Inland and British country destinations as of July 16, 1950. The wrapper illustrated in Fig 5.10 shows a 1949-50 ½d. George VI Brown wrapper uprated with a 1941 ½d. GVI Brown stamp to make up the new rate for a newspaper sent to an Inland destination..



*Fig. 5.10 1949-50 Half Penny George VI Wrapper uprated with a ½d. George VI Brown stamp to pay the 1d. Inland Newspaper (Registered) rate  
Posted from Titirangi to Hamilton  
July 12, 1951*

**5.12 Newspapers to Inland & all Overseas Destinations (January 1, 1953 - February 28, 1954)**

Minimum postage rates increased from 1d. to 1½d. for newspapers mailed to all Inland and Overseas destinations as of January 1, 1953 (*see footnote below*). However as described in Appendix 1, Table 1.5 and summarized in Table 5.4 below, different weight limits applied for Inland & Overseas categories of Registered and Unregistered newspapers.

| <b>Table 5.4 Weight Limits for the 1½d. Newspaper Rates effective January 1, 1953</b> |                                     |                                       |
|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b><u>Destination</u></b>   | <b><u>Registered Newspapers</u></b> | <b><u>Unregistered Newspapers</u></b> |
| Inland  | 1 <sup>st</sup> 8 ounces            | 1 <sup>st</sup> 4 ounces              |
| Overseas  | 1 <sup>st</sup> 6 ounces            | 1 <sup>st</sup> 2 ounces              |

Figs. 5.11 and 5.12 show two 1942-47 One Penny George VI Green Newspaper Wrappers each uprated with a 1941 ½d. GVI Brown stamp to make up the new 1½d. rate to an Inland and Overseas destination respectively.

**Fig. 5.11 1942-47 One Penny George VI Green Wrapper uprated with a 1941 ½d. George VI Brown to pay the 1½d. Inland Newspaper rate  
Posted from Epsom to Hamilton  
July 6, 1953**



**Fig. 5.12 1942-47 One Penny George VI Green Wrapper uprated with a 1941 ½d. George VI Brown to pay the 1½d. Overseas Newspaper rate  
Posted from Shirley to Detroit, Michigan  
September 18, 1953**

Note: **The Postage Stamps of New Zealand - Volume IX**, p 312, contains reference to the postal rate increase taking place January 7, 1953. In light of the reference sources accessed by the authors for this current paper, it is thought that the effective date is for the increase in base newspaper rates from 1d. to 1½d. was January 1, 1953 (*see Section 1.6*).

***Bibliography - Section 5 Use of Half Penny Stamps to uprate Postal Stationery***

- (1) P&T Official Circular Vol LVI No 9 (September 16, 1939) p. 60
- (2) P&T Official Circular Vol LVI No 10 (October 16, 1939) pp 70-71
- (3) The Postage Stamps of New Zealand, Volume IX, 2006 RPSNZ Inc, Wellington NZ pp. 125-27
- (4) The Postage Stamps of New Zealand, Volume IX, 2006 RPSNZ Inc, Wellington NZ p. 162
- (5) The Postage Stamps of New Zealand, Volume IX, 2006 RPSNZ Inc, Wellington NZ p. 42
- (6) The Postage Stamps of New Zealand, Volume IX, 2006 RPSNZ Inc, Wellington NZ p. 242