

Short-paid Mail from Australia to New Zealand - Part IV

An Australian Letter received in the T3/T10 Period

by Stephen F Prest and Pat Skinner

Not long after Part III of these writings on short-paid mail from Australia to New Zealand appeared in the April 2012 issue of *The Mail Coach* ⁽¹⁾, we came aware of the cover illustrated below. Readers will recall from previous articles in this series that Australia changed its exchange rates relative to the gold centimes from 1d. = 10 centimes to 1d. = 4 centimes in July 1948 (the T4/T10 period) and then to 1d. = 3 centimes in December 1949 (the T3/T10 period). On March 1, 1950, New Zealand followed suit, devaluing its exchange rate from 1d. = 10 centimes to 1d. = 4 centimes.

Examples of the minimum 1d. postage due being applied during the T4/T10 and T3/T10 periods were discussed in Parts II and III of this series ^(1,2). It was observed in these writings that assessment as to how the Post and Telegraph Department treated incoming shortpaid mail from Australia with higher levels of postage due would require the examination of suitable examples of such covers. The cover illustrated in Figure 1 below sheds light on how the New Zealand Post and Telegraph Department may have treated incoming Australian short-paid mail in instances where the postage due was greater than the 1d. minimum in deficient postage.



Figure 1. Australian Airmail Letter mailed from N.S.W. February 21, 1950 charged 10d. minimum in Postage Due on February 24, 1950 in Epsom

The letter in question was mailed from Australia February 21, 1953, judged to be overweight by Australian postal authorities and therefore short-paid 5d. At the ruling exchange rate of 1d. = 3 centimes, the double deficiency charge was determined to be 30 centimes in Australia (5d. x 2 x 3c = 30 centimes).

The ruling exchange rate in New Zealand in late February 1950 was 1d. = 10 centimes. If this exchange had been used to calculate the postage due, Mrs Sykes would have been charged 3d. in deficient postage.

However, the New Zealand postage due markings on the envelope indicate, in the first instance, 5d. was to be charged in deficient postage and then subsequently, 10d., as indicated both in manuscript and postage due stamps affixed to the envelope. The 10d. actually charged represents the double deficiency of the actual 5d. underpayment in pence.

The 10d. charge also indicates, in the case of this letter at least, that New Zealand postal authorities may have ignored Australia's adoption of lower pence to centime exchange rates in the T4/T10 and T3/T10 periods from July 1948 to end February 1950 and determined the amount of postage due on the basis of pence and shillings as per previous practice. The authors remain on the lookout for further examples of short-paid mail between Australia and New Zealand in this period and would welcome any information or scans of examples members may be able to provide either directly via email at stephen.prest@gmail.com or through the kind auspices of our Editor.

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References:

- (1) "Short Paid Mail from Australia to New Zealand - Part III" by S. F. Prest and P. J. Skinner, *The Mail Coach*, Vol. 48 No. 4, Whole No. 378 (April 2012) pp. 156-159
- (2) "Short Paid Mail from Australia to New Zealand - Part II" by S. F. Prest and P. J. Skinner, *The Mail Coach*, Vol. 48 No. 3, Whole No. 377 (February 2012) pp. 98-101