

dies were a gift made to him many years ago by a Postmaster-General, and he offered them to the New Zealand Government for £250 sterling. It seemed clear that the dies could not properly have been given away by any one, but as counsel in England advised that there were legal difficulties in the way of securing repossession of them, other than by purchase, and as the Post Office viewed with concern the possibility of their falling into the hands of an unscrupulous person, it was decided to pay the amount asked for. The dies have now arrived in New Zealand and will shortly be defaced as required by regulations.

Cable and Wireless, Ltd.

In 1946 Parliament was informed in parliamentary paper F.-2 of a proposed transfer to public ownership of the external telecommunications system of the British Commonwealth, of the pending acquisition by the United Kingdom Government of all shares of Cable and Wireless, Ltd., and of the proposed subsequent purchase by the New Zealand Government of the company's assets in New Zealand.

The proposed transactions were proceeded with in 1947-48, and, pending the establishment of national bodies of the partner Governments and the Central Board, which will ultimately conjointly control the overseas cable and wireless facilities of the British Commonwealth, the New Zealand Government agreed to manage the affairs of the company in New Zealand for an annual fee of some £3,000. In addition, interest at the rate of 4 per cent. on the purchase-price of the assets, £43,372, is payable by the company. The working-expenses have not been charged to vote, "Post and Telegraph Department," but to a current account to which the revenue is credited.

There is no specific statutory authority for this agency arrangement, but, in view of its nature, and as section 96 (1) (b) of the Post and Telegraph Act, 1928, contemplates that the Post Office may, on occasions, act as an agent, no question has been raised by the Audit Office.

Hostels and Workers' Camps

A number of Departments continue to find it necessary or desirable to provide hostels or camps for the accommodation of their employees or trainees. The Department of Labour and Employment specializes more particularly in supplying accommodation for industrial workers and for immigrants, who, in some cases, are employed in Government Departments—*e.g.*, tradesmen working for the Government Printing Office.

The main systems under which Departments operate hostels are—

- (1) Provide the buildings and usually part or all of the furniture and equipment, and—
 - (a) Charge boarders a nominal rent, leaving them to arrange their own catering.