

There were 61,057 telegraph money-orders issued for £210,790 7s. 6d., as compared with 54,933 orders for £187,472 14s. in 1903—an increase of 6,124 in number and £23,317 13s. 6d. in amount.

126,128 orders for £328,661 5s. 5d. were issued on places beyond New Zealand, as against 122,777 orders for £308,157 6s. 8d. during 1903.

30,844 orders for £117,617 8s. 6d. were issued in places beyond New Zealand for payment in the colony, as compared with 30,812 orders for £117,521 9s. 11d. during the previous year.

The commission received for money-orders amounted to £16,385 9s., as against £15,881 18s. 5d. received during 1903.

SAVINGS-BANK.

There were twenty-one offices opened during the year for the transaction of Savings-Bank business—namely, Ballance, Castlecliff, Cheltenham, Greenmeadows, Grey Lynn, Gumtown, Hinakura, Hukerenui, Kilbirnie, Koeke, Mataroa, Mornington, Muritai, Ohura, Oio, Pihama, Pirihoa, Rangiwahia, Turangarere, Waimamaku, and Whitford.

Four offices were closed—namely, Opitonui, Piriaka, Riverhead, and Tokatea.

There were 510 offices open at the end of 1904, as against 493 at the end of the previous year.

57,769 accounts were opened and 42,280 closed, the net gain on the year's working being 15,489 accounts. The number of depositors on the 31st December was 259,164, and the proportion of accounts per head of population was 1 in 3·31, as compared with 1 in 3·42 at the end of the previous year.

The deposits numbered 469,799, representing £5,836,540, an average of £12 8s. 6d. per transaction. The withdrawals numbered 323,609 for £5,664,770 3s. 9d., an average of £17 10s. 1d. for each withdrawal.

The net amount added by the depositors to their savings during the year was therefore £171,769 16s. 3d., plus £200,930 6s. 1d. interest earned and credited, making a total of £372,700 2s. 4d.

The total amount at credit of depositors increased from £7,388,681 18s. 7d. at the close of the previous year to £7,761,382 0s. 11d. on the 31st December last, representing a sum equal to £9 1s. per head of the entire population, and £29 18s. 11d. to each depositor. Last year the figures were £9 0s. 2d. and £30 6s. 5d. respectively.

The interest credited to depositors since the Post-Office Savings-Banks were established in 1867 now amounts to £2,907,147 13s.

The cost of working the Savings-Banks amounted to 4·84d. per transaction, or about £16,000 for the year.

The cost of management per cent. on the total amount at credit of depositors was 0·206 per cent., or 4s. 1d. per £100.

POSTAL NOTES.

The following were created postal-note offices during the year 1904-5 :—

Auroa	Hinakura	Oio	Tokarahi
Ballance	Hukerenui	Papatowai	Turangarere
Cheltenham	Livingstone	Pihama	Waimamaku
Colac Bay	Mahau	Pirihoa	Whitford
Greenmeadows	Nydia Bay	Puketitiri	Woodside
Gumtown	Ohura	Tiniroto	

—a total of 23. Six offices were closed—namely, Cardrona, Opitonui, Piriaka, Riverhead, Tokatea, and Upper Waiwera.

The number of offices at which postal notes were sold at the end of the year was 620, as compared with 603 on the 31st March, 1904.

785,347 notes of the value of £250,123 7s. 6d. were sold, as against 707,044 for £220,069 11s. sold during the previous year.

The postal notes paid numbered 775,417, of the value of £247,320 15s. 6d., as compared with 704,031, of the value of £219,312 2s. 6d., paid during 1903-4.

The postal-note commission amounted to £5,404, as against £4,795 3s. 4½d.

INLAND MAILS.

During a heavy flood in the Opawa River on the 18th March, 1904, a regrettable accident occurred to the Nelson-Blenheim mail-coach whereby Mr. George Richardson, the driver, lost his life, and four horses were drowned. One bag of mail from Blenheim to Havelock Suburban was lost. The late driver left a wife and one child, who were provided for under the policy against accident which the Department requires all mail-contractors to take out.

In March, 1904, floods occurred in the district south of Dunedin, causing interruptions to railway mail-services on the main line, and on the Lawrence and Owaka branch lines.

In November last important changes were made in the railway and steamer services providing close through connection between Auckland and Invercargill, which reduced the total time of the journey by south-bound steamer and rail to about fifty-five hours. From Invercargill to Auckland the time occupied is about fifty-two hours. The express daily services between Christchurch and Dunedin, and Dunedin and Invercargill, were, in addition, duplicated. The alterations have provided services which are a marked improvement on those formerly existing. Under the initial arrangement the train from Wellington to New Plymouth was timed to leave at 9.10 a.m., but as this was found to disarrange business in the Manawatu district it was from the 1st March last decided to put forward the time of departure to 7.50 a.m. This involved