

Both the telegraph and telephone-exchange services have increased at a satisfactory rate.

Full details with reference to all these matters will be found in the annual report of the Department.

STAMP AND OTHER DUTIES.

The revenue derivable from this Department has increased very much of late years. Less than ten years ago the revenue rarely exceeded half a million per annum. During the last seven years, however, the revenue collected each year has largely exceeded that of the previous year. This year the revenue collected was £1,470,307, as against £1,417,207 last year, an increase of £53,100. This is a very satisfactory result, especially in view of the fact that the increased charges authorized last session had only been in operation for a portion of the year. The cost of collection is less than 1 per cent.

The revenues collected by the Stamp Department are derived from various sources, comprising death and stamp duties, totalizator and bank taxes, and fees from the administration of the Joint-stock Companies, Mining Companies, Building Societies, and Industrial and Provident Societies Acts, as well as from the control of the Land Transfer and Deeds Registration Department, which also comes within the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Stamps.

LAND REVENUE.

The gross revenue received from Crown and endowment lands of the Dominion shows an increase for the past year. The total receipts amounted to £1,286,524, as against £1,163,127 received during the previous twelve months.

Analysing the figures under the main headings the result is,—

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Ordinary Crown lands	501,941
Land for settlements	480,288
Cheviot Estate	15,654
National endowment	115,183
Primary and secondary education endowments ..	87,504
Other sources	85,954
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	£1,286,524
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The amounts outstanding at the 31st March were £23,514, representing postponements of rent granted under section 13 of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1912, and £33,737, representing ordinary arrears.

SETTLEMENT OF CROWN LANDS.

A total area of approximately 750,000 acres was offered for public application during the year under the various tenures provided by the Land Act and the Land for Settlements Act, &c., and the bulk of this land was readily taken up.

Full particulars as to the present condition of settlement throughout the Dominion will be laid before you in a separate parliamentary paper (C.-1).

In accordance with the intention of the Government to afford every facility for the selection of land by members of our Expeditionary Forces who have returned to the Dominion and who have been honourably discharged, a considerable area has been proclaimed for selection under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, 1915. Other suitable areas are under survey, and will be made available as early as possible. Already numbers of applications for land have been lodged.

The regulations governing the granting of financial assistance to soldier settlers have been issued, and money up to an amount of £50,000 has been authorized under the Act to provide advances to assist in developing the holdings.