

WORK PERFORMED FOR OTHER DEPARTMENTS.

Among the many branches of work undertaken during the fifteen months ended 31st March, 1921, for other Departments of the Public Service, those deserving of particular mention are the Customs duties collected, of a total amount of £541,109, and for the same Department £39,841 for beer duty.

The agencies for the State Advances, Public Trust, and Government Insurance Departments lead to a very large amount of business. The amount received for the State Advances reached a total of £1,970,270, for the Public Trustee £860,855, and for the Government Insurance £297,488, while the amounts paid were £1,888,270 for the State Advances and £1,782,770 for the Public Trustee.

Land and income taxes may be paid at any money-order office, and the total amount of these taxes received was £8,527,000. For the Valuation Department fees amounting to £21,438 were collected.

A very large number of claims chargeable to the appropriations made by Parliament are paid through the medium of the Post Office on behalf of the Treasury. Last year the amount so paid in cash was £6,463,620.

For the Pensions Department £913,710 was paid on account of old-age pensions, £391,355 on account of epidemic, military, miners', and widows' pensions, and £2,214,451 on account of war pensions.

Contributions to the National Provident Fund collected by Postmasters amounted to £88,192, and the payments amounted to £41,787; £264,400 was paid out on behalf of the Public Service Superannuation Fund; £117,548 was paid on behalf of the Teachers' Superannuation Fund, and £95,550 received.

Among the items which do not bulk largely with regard to amount, but involve numerous transactions, may be mentioned the sale of fishing licenses to the value of £1,857, and game licenses, £5,545; machinery and boiler-certificate fees collected, £16,635; mining licenses, £204; and sanatorium receipts, £3,333.

On behalf of the British Government £88,583 was paid to Imperial pensioners resident in New Zealand.

For the registration of births, deaths, and marriages, and the performance of the marriage ceremony, Postmasters collected £5,386.

Discount-stamps valued at £865 5s. and numbering 830,640 were sold; but the popularity of these stamps does not seem to be increasing, the sales being still practically confined to Wellington.

Some idea of the other services performed may be obtained from the balance-sheet of the Post Office Account.

Treasury postal-drafts for amounts under £5 are issued for payment through the Post Office. The amount paid under this heading was £26,350.

The sum of £1,109,380 was collected for investment in Government loans.

The earnings of inmates of industrial schools are, under the Industrial Schools Act, collected and credited to special Savings-bank accounts open on behalf of each inmate. The total amount collected was £23,707.

TELEGRAPHS.

Commencing on the 1st November, 1920, a system of night letter-telegrams was introduced, and has been largely availed of. The messages, which must be in plain language, are accepted up to within one hour of closing, and are delivered by post at the office of destination the morning following the day of presentation. The charge is 1s. 6d. for thirty-six words and $\frac{1}{4}$ d. for each additional word. For the first five months ended on the 31st March, 1921, the number transmitted was 5,525, and the value £494.

A system of rendering telephone toll accounts monthly instead of weekly was tried at the four centres at the beginning of 1920, and proved so successful that the system was later extended to about 130 exchanges.

The telegraph revenue, including telephone-exchange and miscellaneous receipts, increased from £1,038,506 to £1,237,763, equivalent to an increase of 19 per cent. If to this be added the value of free Government telegrams, the total amounts to £1,244,799. The telegraph revenue was £704,228, and the telephone £533,535. The payments made on account of these services amounted to £1,369,780, an increase equal to 27 per cent.

The number of ordinary telegrams decreased from 7,295,992 to 6,324,982, a decrease of 971,010, or 13·3 per cent. This represents 5·29 per unit of population, as against 5·96 for the previous year. The revenue from this class of message increased from £315,454 to £356,106.

Urgent telegrams show a decrease in number of 190,176, or 32·5 per cent., and in revenue of £233.

The number of Press telegrams increased from 358,352 to 372,683, and the revenue from £30,748 to £34,976.

The number of telephone toll communications increased from 6,718,526 to 6,786,707, an increase of 68,181, or 1·01 per cent., and increased in value from £211,911 to £254,182, an increase of £42,271. The average value of each communication increased from 7·5d. to 8·9d. The total number represents 5·68 per unit of population, as against 5·49 last year.

Government telegrams for which no payment was received totalled during the year 116,385, and the value thereof was £7,036, as against 116,452 and £5,830 for the previous year. If the figures for this class of telegram are added to those for paid telegrams the total number of all codes is 14,000,851, valued at £698,520, as against 15,074,067, valued at £610,051, for the previous year. These totals show a decrease in number of 1,073,216, or 7 per cent., and an increase in value of £88,469, or 14 per cent. The proportion of paid messages per unit of population was 11·62, as against 12·32 for the previous year.