

Contributions to the National Provident Fund collected by Postmasters amounted to £79,319, and the payments amounted to £79,652; £297,333 was paid out on behalf of the Public Service Superannuation Fund; £117,640 was paid on behalf of the Teachers' Superannuation Fund, and £110,605 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 £1,648; game licenses, £7,576; and opossum licenses, £910; machinery and boiler-certificate fees collected, £16,749; mining licenses, £178; sanatorium receipts, £3,732; rents collected from Postmasters in occupation of official quarters, £8,544; Public Health Department revenue, £13,257; orchard-tax, £1,653; Education Department revenue, £5,768; Agriculture Department, £1,243; land-drainage rates collected on behalf of the Lands and Survey Department, £3,977; royalties, &c., collected on behalf of the State Forests Department, £37,539; proceeds of sale of surplus military stores on behalf of the Defence Department, £25,890.

On behalf of the British Government £124,830 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 £3,505.

Discount-stamps valued at £341, and numbering 327,360, were sold. The sales are 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 £92,054.

The sum of £242,160 was collected for investment in Government loans. This does not include the amounts invested in Post Office investment certificates, which totalled £30,689.

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 £11,589.

## TELEGRAPHS.

### REDUCTION IN TELEGRAPH-RATES.

The full effect of the reduction in rates, which dated from the 1st February, 1923, was not felt immediately. The increase in the volume of telegraph traffic in February, 1923, compared with February, 1922, was not great; but the numbers of all classes of messages handled in the following month, compared with March of the previous year, show appreciable increases, as under: Ordinary telegrams, 9 per cent.; urgent telegrams, 13 per cent.; Press telegrams, 15 per cent.; night letter-telegrams, 205 per cent.; toll communications, 11 per cent.

The total number of messages for March, 1923, was 123,812 in excess of the number for March, 1922; and, despite the substantial reduction in rates, the revenue was very little less.

Compared with January of 1923 the telegraph business during March shows an increase of 18,000 telegrams and a decrease of 8,000 toll communications—*i.e.*, a net increase of 10,000 messages; while the revenue received was £5,000 less.

In view of the short period during which the new rates have been in operation, the figures are considered very satisfactory.

### NEW RATES FOR TOLL COMMUNICATIONS.

On the 1st February the method of assessing the charges for toll communications was altered. Prior to that date charges were made for distances in divisions of 25 miles up to 100 miles, and for every 50 miles over that distance. The new rates are based on a charge of 2d. per mile of toll line used. Charges are calculated at 1d. for each 5 miles up to 100 miles, and 2d. for each 10 miles over 100 miles. This system of charging the user of a toll line for the actual length of line used is considered more equitable than the method previously in force. Under the old system, the minimum charge for a communication over a toll line up to 25 miles in length was 6d., and in the case of subscribers speaking from their own telephones 3d. The minimum charge for both subscribers and non-subscribers is now 4d. over a distance not exceeding 20 miles. Although the charge for communications between certain places shows an increase, in other cases it is now lower than formerly. Provision is now made for half-rate communications after 9 instead of 10 p.m.; and for communications between midnight and 6 a.m. the maximum time for the minimum fee has been extended from three to six minutes.

### NIGHT LETTER-TELEGRAMS.

The reduction from the 1st February, 1923, of the rates for night letter-telegrams considerably increased the business, as here shown: January, 2,444; February, 4,812; March, 5,921.

### RECEIVED INLAND TELEGRAM: ABOLITION OF OFFICE COPY.

Prior to the 1st July, 1922, only one copy of received inland telegrams was made at fifteen of the larger offices. At all other offices an office copy was taken. On the date mentioned, when a new form was introduced for received telegrams, the taking of duplicate copies was abolished at all offices in charge of permanent officers of the Department.