

WORK PERFORMED FOR OTHER DEPARTMENTS.

The various Departments of the Government Service continue to make the fullest use of the Post Office for the collection of revenue and the disbursement of sums due.

The cost of work for other Departments when performed by my Department is trifling compared with what it would be if the work at the many agencies throughout the Dominion were undertaken by the Departments chiefly responsible for it—a step unnecessary at present, as in the working of the agencies the Post Office renders efficient service, and in the performance of this work it long ago won the confidence of the public. Were the Post Office to be relieved of the work it now performs in the behalf of other Departments, it requires little imagination to appreciate what the increased cost of administration would be to the Departments concerned.

The ease with which the Post Office can handle Dominion-wide undertakings such as the registration and licensing of motor-vehicles is largely due to the flexibility of its accounting system, which is framed to admit of practically unlimited extension without the machinery becoming strained. The treatment necessary to the different classes of transactions which call for special knowledge to comply with the requirements of the various Departments is little less varied than the amounts, which range from one shilling to thousands of pounds; while the duties of a Postmaster range from the paying of a voucher to the performance of the marriage ceremony.

MONEY-ORDERS.

Money-order business for the year shows a marked increase, the money-orders issued exceeding those of last year by approximately fifty thousand in number and by £300,000 in value. On the 1st April, 1924, a substantial reduction was made in the rate of commission, but so great has been the expansion of business that the total commission earned during the year exceeds that earned during the previous year by £184.

The system of trade-charge money-orders introduced some few years ago for the purpose of providing for payment on delivery of the value of parcels despatched to or from the United Kingdom is growing in popularity. The number of orders issued on the United Kingdom for the year was 3,545, and the amount remitted £12,106 6s. 5d. When it becomes more widely known that a person in New Zealand may order goods from England and pay for them at this end on arrival the system will be used more largely.

SAVINGS-BANKS.

In the earlier part of the financial year the opportunities for safe investment of funds in securities yielding a larger rate of interest than the Post Office Savings-bank can afford to give tempted a larger number than usual of the banks' clients to transfer some of their deposits, with the result that the withdrawals exceeded the deposits. This condition of affairs, however, was only transitory. The returns for each of the first three months of 1925 disclosed an excess of deposits over withdrawals amounting in all to no less a sum than £405,577, as against £302,662 for the same period in 1924.

The fact that the Postmaster-General may now pay up to £200 to the legal representative of a deceased depositor without requiring him to take out letters of administration or prove any will which may have been left, together with the provision whereby a depositor may nominate one or more persons to receive a portion or the whole of the amount at credit of the account after his death, serves to enable the widow or other members of the family of a deceased depositor to get possession of often much-needed funds without cost and without delay.

One of the most striking facts in connection with the Post Office Savings-bank is its great popularity. The present estimated population of the Dominion is 1,324,966, and of these people no less than 735,148 are depositors in the bank. The number is 55·48 per cent., which must easily be a record for any bank in the world.

SAFE-DEPOSIT SYSTEM.

Sealed packets containing securities, insurance policies, deeds, wills, or other paper or parchment documents are accepted for custody at all money-order offices, in charge of permanent officers. The service, for which only a nominal charge is