

HAWERA : ASSESSMENT OF CUSTOMS DUTY ON OVERSEAS PARCELS.

In order to prevent delay in delivery of parcels for Hawera on which Customs duty is payable, the Department was asked to constitute Hawera a clearing-office for Customs parcels and thus obviate the necessity for such parcels being cleared at New Plymouth. The matter was referred to the Customs Department, which considered that the expense involved would not be warranted; but, as as a compromise, it was arranged for Customs parcels for Hawera to be dealt with at Patea. The change, which is by way of trial, came into operation on the 1st November.

BUILDINGS.

During the year the Public Works Department arranged for the erection of post-office buildings at each of the following places : Hyde, Middlemarch, Mokauti, Motu, Ngatea, Ngongotaha, Ohingaiti, Orari, Pokeno, Pongaroa, Pukemiro, St. Andrew's, St. Heliers, Silverdale, Tarras, Te Uku, Waikino, Wellington (automatic telephone exchange).

Additions were made to the post-office buildings at Horopito, Kaikohe, and Te Aroha. At Whakatane additional accommodation for the post-office was obtained by taking that portion of the post-office building previously in occupation by the Postmaster as residential quarters.

Additions were made to the railway-station buildings at Kohuratahi and Tahora to provide accommodation for the post-office.

At Greymouth and Napeir combined workshop and garage buildings were erected during the year. Motor-garages were provided at Cambridge and Gore.

At Sheffield arrangements were made to lease a building and to adapt it for use as a post-office.

The Department's business at Albury, which had previously been conducted at the railway-station, was transferred during the year to another building. The new premises, which are the property of the Department, were secured some years ago in anticipation of the Department's requirements.

At Ashburton the Department secured the freehold of a property previously leased for the purpose of a garage and store.

Mention was made in last year's report regarding a probable addition to the chief-post-office building at Gisborne. The work is now in progress.

Plans are now in course of preparation for buildings at the following places—Marton, Napier, and Taumarunui; and for additions to existing buildings at Palmerston North, Hastings, and Wanganui.

In connection with street-improvement work in the City of Auckland, Government recently entered into an arrangement with the Auckland City Council for the exchange of certain real estate. The transaction resulted in the transfer of the Auckland East post-office building and site in Shortland Street to the Auckland City Council. The building, which is to be demolished, was a very old structure, and until 1912 it housed the Chief Post-office at Auckland. If the post and telephone office at present conducted in the building is to be continued, new accommodation will require to be found for the office. The manual telephone exchange previously in use at Auckland has been replaced by an automatic telephone exchange, which is housed in a building erected in Wellesley Street. Portion of the Shortland Street building has been used as a store for telegraph and telephone material and as a workshop. It was necessary, therefore, to secure other accommodation for these purposes. This is being provided by means of an addition to the workshop and garage building in Stanley Street.

In places at which the Department has in commission petrol-driven vehicles, and where the circumstances warrant it, suitable arrangements require to be made for the storage and delivery of motor-spirit. Storage of spirit is provided by means of steel tanks placed underground, and delivery is made by means of a pump. The capacity of petrol tanks varies from 200 to 1,000 gallons, and the pumps are of two types, the measuring type and the non-measuring type.

POSTAL NOTES.

The popularity of the method of remitting small sums to places within the Dominion by means of postal notes is ever increasing. Postal-note business again shows a decided increase, the sales for the year ended 31st March, 1925, being 2,846,333, of a total value of £860,000, an increase in sales over the previous year of 193,556 in numbers and £55,685 in value.

The commission derived from this source during the past year totalled £19,470 15s. 11d., being an increase of £1,274 4s. on that earned in the year 1923-24.

BRITISH POSTAL ORDERS.

The sale of British postal orders also shows a very marked increase: 132,348 orders were sold, of a value of £75,553 12s. 7d., as against 115,498 orders, amounting to £66,937, for the previous year. The number of orders paid for the year was 27,168, of a value of £16,135, as against 25,051, for £14,943, the previous year.

TELEGRAPHS.**RESULTS OF "ALL BLACK" FOOTBALL MATCHES.**

During the tour of the "All Black" football team in England, Ireland, and France, arrangements were made by the Department to transmit the results of matches to all telegraph and telephone offices free of charge. Transmission was effected with as little delay as possible, and the results were exhibited at every office throughout the Dominion. Results received in the Dominion on Sunday mornings were promptly communicated to all telephone exchanges then open and were given to subscribers on request. This service was greatly appreciated.