

POST OFFICE SAVINGS-BANKS IN NEW ZEALAND'S DEPENDENCIES AND IN THE MANDATED TERRITORY OF WESTERN SAMOA.

Possibly it is not generally known that the beneficent influence of the Post Office Savings-bank is in full operation both in Samoa and in the Cook Islands. In each case the New Zealand Government lends its organization, even to the extent of sharing with the Island Administration some gilt-edged investments for the surplus funds. The actual work, however, is conducted by officers under the control of the respective Administrations. In order to provide the maximum of benefit to the clients of the bank, a measure of decentralization was introduced in the case of Samoa about five years ago, when a savings-bank ledger office was established at Apia. This enabled depositors to obtain repayment of their deposits without reference to the central office in New Zealand. The innovation proved a great success, and accordingly a similar arrangement was made last year in the case of the lower Cook Group, with effect from the 5th May, 1924. Depositors at Rarotonga are now able to withdraw on demand, and those on the adjacent islands can obtain repayment upon warrants issued at Rarotonga.

The facilities provided are much appreciated, and already habits of thrift are being inculcated and fostered, to the ultimate benefit of the Natives.

MOTOR TRANSPORT.

During the past five years the Department's fleet of motor-vehicles has increased very considerably. The three main reasons for this growth are, firstly, the endeavour to cope with the ever-increasing demand for telegraph and telephone extension, coupled with the necessity of maintaining existing telegraph and telephone systems in an efficient state, and converting earth-working lines to metallic on account of the hydro-electric works in progress throughout the Dominion; secondly, the Government's direction to the Department to assume control of Government motor-vehicles in the four centres; and, finally, the undertaking by the Department in the larger centres of all services in connection with the transport of mails, delivery of parcels, and clearance of letter-receiving boxes.

The number of vehicles in use on the 31st March, 1925, was 461, while sixty vehicles ordered had not been delivered by the suppliers.

Even the above fleet is insufficient for present needs, and it will be necessary during the ensuing year to add to the fleet of light trucks and lorries in order to meet the requirements of the telegraph and telephone works in progress.

RAILWAY STRIKE.

During the period of the railway strike, from the 22nd to the 29th April, 1924, and until the resumption of the normal railway service, it was necessary for the Department to make other arrangements for the transport of mails usually carried by the Railway Department. Through the very complete arrangements made by the Department little inconvenience was occasioned the public so far as the receipt and despatch of mails were concerned.

By co-operating with newspaper companies and motor-proprietors, expeditious transport of mails was arranged at a minimum cost. In many instances, however, the Department found that it was more economical to use its own motor-vehicles for this purpose. The principal services performed by the Department were: Auckland-Helensville, Auckland-Mercer, Christchurch-Dunedin, Dunedin-Milton, Greymouth-Nelson, Invercargill-Clinton, Napier-Woodville, Wellington-Napier, and Wellington-New Plymouth.

The total additional expenditure incurred by the Department for the carriage of mails until normal train services were resumed was approximately £3,200.

INTERCOLONIAL NIGHT LETTER-TELEGRAM.

The night-letter-telegram service, which was introduced between the Dominion and Australia on the 1st May, 1924, and which has proved so popular, was extended to Fiji on the 1st December.

The number of night letter-telegrams exchanged with the Commonwealth at present is approximately six thousand per annum, involving a transmission of about a million and a half words.