

expectations, and it was not without difficulty that the supply of temporary plates was made to equal the demand. The registration work was particularly heavy during the months of January and February, but is now practically confined to new vehicles and to a few old vehicles which owners have apparently kept in garages until they were prepared to register them.

“Up to the end of March, 1925, the number of motor-vehicles of all descriptions registered throughout the Dominion was 99,233. The amount of money paid up to the end of March, 1925, into the Main Highways Account to the credit of the Main Highways Revenue Fund was £267,500.

“The Post Office has catered well for motorists in the direction of affording them every reasonable facility for registering their vehicles, without undue delay or inconvenience. Most permanent Postmasters have been appointed Deputy Registrars of Motor-vehicles, and are thus enabled to accept applications for and issue certificates of registration, licenses, and registration-plates. In addition, each Postmaster who has not been appointed a Deputy Registrar, but who is in charge of a money-order office, and each Postmistress in charge of a money-order office, has been authorized to accept applications for registration and license, and to collect the prescribed fees. Applications accepted by such officers are dealt with by the nearest Deputy Registrar, who forwards the required documents and registration-plates to the Postmaster or Postmistress concerned for delivery to the vehicle-owner. Under the present system, motor-vehicles may be registered at almost every village in the Dominion.

“The system of operation drawn up by this Department has worked smoothly from the commencement; and, in view of the fact that the registration of motor-vehicles is the first of its kind in the Dominion, the successful and smooth working of the system is a matter for satisfaction. The Post Office, with its widespread ramifications, is admirably suited for the work of compiling Dominion registers; and in the case of the motor registration I think it must be conceded that no other Department of State could have made such complete and satisfactory arrangements.”

*Other Legislation.*—There were, as usual, quite a number of local Acts touching directly or indirectly on matters administered by this Department, and the Department furnished to the Local Bills Committee a number of reports on various Bills which were introduced. There were also a large number of clauses affecting this Department inserted in the Appropriation, Finance, and “Washing-up” Acts.

With respect to the “Washing-up” Act, it has now been decided that it be brought down in two parts, the first relating to Crown lands, public reserves, &c., and the second part being a Local Bodies’ Empowering Act. Part I will be dealt with by the Lands and Survey Department, as hitherto. Part II, which will contain all provisions other than those affecting Crown lands and public reserves, will be promoted by this Department. It is anticipated that it will throw a considerable amount of additional work on this Department, and I am making arrangements to cope with this additional work. I have advised all Departments of the procedure which will be adopted with respect to Part II, in order to facilitate matters.

#### LAND AGENTS ACT.

During the year 1,188 licenses were issued and seventeen transfers granted. Further cases of defalcation were also considered.

#### ANIMALS PROTECTION AND GAME ACT.

As usual, open seasons for game-shooting and deer-stalking were provided in a number of acclimatization districts. The Government continued to assist, by way of bonuses for each deer-tail submitted, in the thinning-out of deer in the South Island, bonuses having been paid in respect of over 7,500 deer killed. An open season was again fixed for opossums in a number of districts, and the season proved a very good one, 95,991 skins being taken. Questions affecting opossums are still being closely watched by the Department.

#### NATURALIZATION.

The British Nationality and Status of Aliens (in New Zealand) Act, 1923, was, by Proclamation dated 13th May, 1924, declared to come into operation on that date. Naturalization was granted to 248 persons during the year, and in addition three certificates were issued to persons in regard to whose nationality a doubt previously existed, and one to a person previously naturalized.

#### THERMAL FISHERIES.

Trout hatchery operations commenced on the 11th June, when the first rainbow-trout ova were collected, and daily collections were made up to the 16th September, thus showing, as compared with last year’s operations, that the fish generally were a month late in spawning. A total of 2,451,000 ova were dealt with, as follows: 1,197,000 were reared to the fry stage, and 1,254,000 were disposed of in the eyed stage. 100,000 rainbow-trout ova were received from Lake Hawea, and liberated as fry in Lake Taupo. The fish taken from Lake Taupo this year have shown a marked improvement in both condition and size as compared with last year, and the general average weight of the fish taken is stated to be about 10 lb. This is attributed to the enormous increase of the introduced food-supply that has taken place.

*Rotorua and Rotoiti Lakes.*—Here again the fish have improved in size and condition, but, partly owing to the very late past spawning season and the present bountiful food-supply, large numbers have not been taken by means of fly fishing as compared with other seasons, although a fair number have been caught by means of trolling.

*Rotomaha, Okataina, and Okareka Lakes.*—The fishing in these lakes has given good results, the fish taken averaging about 4 lb.