

RURAL DELIVERIES.

Applications for the extension of rural delivery facilities continue to be received. Many areas formerly served by small post-offices are now served by rural deliveries.

For the purpose of meeting a demand for a larger-sized rural box which will give adequate protection both to bulky post parcels and to other goods the Department has introduced a rural box measuring 24 in. by 15 in. by 12 in. Nowadays the rural contractor frequently carries the settlers' bread, meat, groceries, &c., and a box of these dimensions will serve the dual purpose of affording protection to private parcels as well as to postal packets.

PARCEL-POST.

In October, 1925, a system of exchange of insured parcels was inaugurated between New Zealand and Canada.

During the year arrangements were concluded for the inauguration of an insured-parcel service between New Zealand and Fiji. The new service will operate from the 1st July, 1926.

The Department has agreed also to the introduction of a cash-on-delivery system for parcels exchanged between New Zealand and Fiji.

“INSURED BOX” SERVICE.

From the 1st December, 1925, an “insured box” service was inaugurated between New Zealand and Great Britain. Fuller particulars of the service will be found at page 21.

CHEAP POSTAGE-RATE FOR LIBRARY BOOKS.

A cheap postage-rate for library books was introduced on the 1st January, 1926. Books exchanged between libraries, between libraries and their subscribers, between recognized book clubs, or between recognized book clubs and their subscribers, may now be sent within New Zealand at the rate of 2d. for the first pound and 1d. for each additional pound or fraction of a pound up to 5 lb. This cheap rate should prove a boon to the country reader.

POSTMARKING-MACHINES.

In view of the very satisfactory results obtained from the two “Universal” postmarking-machines installed in 1924 at Auckland and Wellington, four additional machines of the same make and type were obtained and installed at Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, and Wellington. The machines give very distinct and neat impressions, and they are more economical to operate than the other types of machine in use in the service.

Use continues to be made of postmarking-machines for advertising purposes. During the year the postmarkers at the four centres and at Te Aroha carried slogans advertising departmental facilities, New Zealand's value as a tourist resort, and the importance of buying New-Zealand-made goods. The machines at other offices are available for use as required in connection with advertisements of a national or semi-national character.

INSPECTION OF POST-OFFICES.

In 1925, 1,361 visits of inspection were made to post-offices, an audit of the accounts being carried out at each inspection. On no occasion was any serious deficiency in the official cash disclosed.

A conference of Inspectors was held at Wellington in November, 1925, and in order that there might be uniformity in procedure the opportunity was taken to instruct Inspectors fully in their duties.