

A glance at the Department's periodical internal accounts reveals what a variety of transactions is provided for. In making any addition to the already great variety of transactions simplicity of system is aimed at, so that officers are able, with facility, to pass from one class of transaction to another.

GENERAL ELECTION, 1925.

The general election, which was held on the 4th November, 1925, threw a good deal of additional work on the shoulders of the Department. Appreciative references to the work done by the Engineering, Telegraph, and Telephone Branches appeared in newspapers throughout the country. The Postal Branch also responded splendidly to the calls made upon it in connection with the extra volume of mail-matter posted, both before and immediately after the election. The Chief Electoral Officer expressed his appreciation of the excellent manner in which my Department carried out the duties which fell to its share.

OUTBREAKS OF FIRE.

The Department was somewhat unfortunate during the year in the number of fires that occurred in post-office buildings. Three fires occurred in non-permanent post-offices conducted in buildings owned by private persons, and one occurred in a building the property of the Department. The departmental building that was destroyed was the post-office building at Lyell, in the Westport Postal District. The building was very old, however, and was of little value.

On the 25th February, 1926, while on the way from Auckland to Wellington laden with mails, a railway "Z" wagon attached to a mixed train took fire. As the train was approaching Waiouru it was noticed that smoke was rising from a roof-ventilator of the wagon. An attempt to obtain water from the engine-tender was not successful. Speed was therefore accelerated to Waiouru (about half a mile distant), where the wagon was run alongside the railway-tanks and a large volume of water was poured into it through holes cut in one of the doors and in the roof. The water escaped from the wagon too quickly, however, and the flames gained rapidly. A door of the wagon was broken open, and a few bags of mail were salvaged before the men were driven off by the flames. The wagon quickly became a seething mass of flame and was pushed into the station-yard, where it and its contents were entirely destroyed. Eleven bags of mails (five intact and six charred), together with a quantity of "loose" letters, were saved. The mails lost comprised 172 bags of newspapers and 48 bags of parcels from Australian offices, and 76 bags of parcels from Great Britain, all for Wellington and southern offices. The subsequent inquiry was not successful in accounting for the outbreak. As the mail-matter destroyed was lost from a cause beyond control, liability for the loss was not assumed by the Department.

WELLINGTON-NAPIER TRAIN ACCIDENT.

On the 22nd September, 1925, the Wellington-Napier mail-train was derailed near Opapa, and after derailment it took fire. As the result of the accident several persons lost their lives, and many were injured. The mails were in the postal car at the rear of the train, and, with the help of Natives, the Mail Agent succeeded in running the car back some 50 yards out of the fire-danger zone. The accident occurred in a cutting, and the strewn wreckage and the intense heat of the burning carriages rendered it impossible to transfer the mails to the relief train. The mails were therefore taken on to Napier by motor-lorry. The Mail Agent was not injured.

VISIT OF UNITED STATES FLEET.

In connection with the visit of the United States Fleet in August, 1925, the Department established temporary post-offices in Harbour Board buildings on the Auckland and Wellington wharves. Owing partly to the fact that each ship had on board its own post-office, and, in the case of Auckland, owing also to the temporary office being close to the Auckland Chief Post-office, the temporary offices were not patronized to the extent that was anticipated. However, they proved a convenience to many of the visitors not only in the character of post-offices, but also in the guise