

Preliminary work has been commenced in connection with the erection of new chief post-office buildings at Dunedin and Napier; also, it is intended to proceed as soon as possible with the erection of new buildings at Courtenay Place (Wellington), High Street (Christchurch), and Taumarunui, and with extensive additions to the existing buildings at Greymouth, Masterton, Nelson, and Waipukurau.

In order to make suitable provision for the expansion of the Department's business at Palmerston North, the old post-office building (which had previously been occupied by other Departments) and the site were taken over by the Department, and arrangements were made for accommodating the tenants in the chief post-office building.

The growth of the Department's motor transport continually demands the provision of suitable facilities for the storage of petrol. The modern method of providing storage in a tank placed underground and delivering by means of a pump has been adopted at a number of places.

AWARDS FOR SUGGESTIONS.

For many years there has been a standing invitation to all officers of my Department to offer suggestions tending towards the improvement of the Service. An annual prize, which takes the form of a medal and is known as the Gray Memorial Prize, is awarded for the best original suggestion adopted in each year. This system has now been improved upon by the setting-up of a Suggestions Board, consisting of the First Assistant Secretary, the Deputy Chief Telegraph Engineer, and the Assistant Controller of Accounts. The Board has authority (*a*) to make a suitable monetary grant, not exceeding £10, for any meritorious suggestion, whether adopted or otherwise; and (*b*) to make awards from the Gray Memorial Fund.

DEPARTMENTAL TUITION FOR MESSAGE-BOYS AND OTHER JUNIOR OFFICERS.

Efforts have been made during the year to improve the standard of education and efficiency of message-boys and other junior officers in the General Division. Greater inducements for advancement have been offered, and provision has been made for better training and educational facilities.

The standard of the Postal and Telegraph Entrance Examinations has been raised to the level of the Public Service Entrance Examination. A special departmental correspondence course, covering the various educational subjects, has been made available to junior officers, and excellent tuition on a secondary-school basis is given at small cost. Officers, generally, have evinced a keen desire to fit themselves for advancement, and it is gratifying to place on record the fact that over eight hundred officers have enrolled as students.

Arrangements have been made with the Education Department to provide facilities at the various technical schools throughout the Dominion in order to assist those junior officers who are mechanically inclined, and so to provide for the increasing number of mechanics and mechanics required on account of the use of more advanced mechanical and electrical devices.

It is hoped that by reason of a higher standard of education in the junior ranks the Service will benefit generally and so become even more efficient. The scheme practically affords for all juniors a secondary-school education for two years.

APPOINTMENT OF MESSAGE-BOYS.

By an improved method of selection of message-boys, by providing post-primary education after appointment, and by special training while in the junior ranks, it is hoped to attract the best class of lad to the Service. It is anticipated that in this way the old system, under which a large number of untrained adults were appointed to the permanent staff yearly, will disappear.