

### STORES.

Since 1922 it has been the practice in dealing with tenders for the supply of stores to give preference firstly to goods of New Zealand manufacture, and secondly to goods of British origin. For goods made in New Zealand from primary products the preference is against British goods 10 per cent., and against foreign goods 20 per cent. For goods made in New Zealand from imported materials the percentages are 5 and 15 respectively. As the result of this policy many orders have been placed within the Dominion notwithstanding that such action involved a greater expenditure than would have been the case had the orders been placed overseas.

### BUILDINGS.

One hundred and forty-nine post-office buildings have been erected since 1920—a yearly average of more than sixteen buildings. The total expenditure was approximately £600,000.

Additions were made to fifty existing post-office buildings, ranging in cost from £5,000 to £22,000. The erection of the buildings, &c., was necessary in order to keep pace with the progress of the Department's business. The structures have been planned on the most modern lines, and with a view to providing every facility for the convenient transaction of business.

Government recently authorized the erection of five large post-office buildings. Among these is the Dunedin Chief Post-office, nine stories high, estimated to cost not less than £200,000; Napier, £53,000; High Street (Christchurch), £16,000; Courtenay Place (Wellington), £30,000.

To overcome the difficulty experienced by officers of the Department in securing housing accommodation at certain places, Government have, since 1920, authorized the erection or purchase of forty-five residences for occupancy by departmental officers.

Consistent with its efforts to provide the country with the very best postal service, Government have, since 1920, authorized the expenditure of a considerable sum for the purchase of motor-vehicles, and for the erection of twelve workshop buildings and fifty garages. Facilities are being provided at each of the centres for the storage and delivery of petrol by the latest methods.

### PUBLIC SERVICE GARAGES.

There was established in 1922 the Public Service garage system. In effect, Government motor transport (with the exception of the transport of some Departments which it is not practicable to place under the system) in the four principal centres is controlled by the Post and Telegraph Department, which hires vehicles to other Departments. Considerable economy is effected by this system of centralized control.

In the purchase of motor-vehicles preference is given, wherever practicable, to vehicles of English manufacture.

### REGISTRATION OF MOTOR-VEHICLES.

The registration and licensing of motor-vehicles, formerly undertaken by local authorities, has, since the 1st January, 1925, been controlled by the Secretary of the General Post Office in his capacity of Registrar of Motor-vehicles. The present system is a vast improvement on the former one. It provides an adequate check on the payment of license fees, and an efficient index whereby any motor-vehicle can be traced immediately either by the registration number or by the name of the owner. All fees received in excess of the amount required for working-expenses are paid into the Main Highways Account for the purpose of improving and maintaining public roads. Local industry is fostered by the manufacturing of the motor-registration number-plates within the Dominion.

### REFUND OF MOTOR-SPIRITS TAX.

Persons using motor-spirits in milking-machines, farm-tractors, launches, &c., are entitled to receive a refund of duty paid on such motor-spirits. Ninety-two per cent. of the net duty collected from motor-spirits used in motor-vehicles on which a license fee is payable is paid into the Main Highways Account; the balance is apportioned among larger boroughs.