

POST AND TELEGRAPH BUILDINGS.

The need still exists at many places for new or additional accommodation for the conduct of post and telegraph business. During the year, however, satisfactory progress was made with the building programme. Notable works were the erection of a post-office building at Waverley, the making of extensive additions to the post-office buildings at Hawera and Waipukurau, and the erection of a large garage at Dunedin.

At Napier the erection of a chief post-office building is well under way, and will be completed in 1930.

At Dunedin the old chief post-office building has been demolished, and the site has been excavated in readiness for the erection of the new building.

At Greymouth extensive alterations and additions are being made to the chief post-office building.

Among other departmental buildings the erection of which is to be proceeded with in the near future are Courtenay Place (Wellington), High Street (Christchurch), and Upper Symonds Street (Auckland). Large additions will shortly be made to the post-office buildings at Nelson, Newton, Masterton, and Whangarei. During the year a number of sites have been acquired with a view to erecting thereon post-office buildings when required.

The increase in the number of motor-vehicles in use in the Department has necessitated the provision of further garage accommodation. The practice is to erect garages at places at which suitable accommodation for renting is not available or at which the renting of accommodation would be unprofitable. In order to keep the expenditure on garages as low as possible, and to provide accommodation for motor-vehicles at places at which tradesmen are not available for the erection of garages, the Post and Telegraph Department is, by way of trial, having small movable garages constructed at a centre and forwarded in sections to the places at which they are required.

The maintenance of post-office buildings and fittings involves considerable expenditure. Control of this expenditure was assumed by the Post and Telegraph Department from the beginning of the financial year 1928-29. Previously such expenditure was controlled by the Public Works Department.

During the year buildings were erected as follows:—

Post-office buildings: Herekino, Hinds, Te Akau, Tokoroa, Waikaia, Waverley. The building at Tokoroa was erected by the local settlers, half the cost being borne by the Post and Telegraph Department.

Garages: Dunedin, Featherston, Henderson (movable type), Lumsden (small shed converted), Papakura (additional), Tokomaru Bay,* Waipu (old stable converted), Waipukurau,* Waverley.*

Increased or improved accommodation for departmental purposes has been provided at the following places: Ashburton, Ashhurst, Auckland (central telephone exchange, Wellesley Street), Avondale, Gore, Hanmer Springs, Hawera, Kaponga, Matamata, Milton, Mokauiti, Ohinewai, Papakura, Paparoa, Pembroke, Te Teko, Waikanae, Walton, Waipukurau, Wellington (Savings-bank Branch, Chief Post-office), Wellington (Radio).

The following works are in progress: Greymouth—addition and alterations; Mercer—new post-office building; Napier—new chief post-office building; Ohakune—garage and store, and accommodation for carrier-current telephone equipment; Rotorua—addition and alterations; Shirley—new post-office building.

The erection of new post-office buildings at the following places has been authorized: Courtenay Place (Wellington), Cust, New Lynn, Northcote, Dunedin, High Street (Christchurch), Palmerston (South).

Additions and alterations at the following places have been authorized: Cromwell, Invercargill, Masterton, Nelson, Newton, Wairoa, Whangarei.

On 17th June last a severe earthquake occurred in the Nelson, Westport, and Greymouth districts, causing extensive damage to the Nelson, Greymouth, and Westport Post-offices. So extensive was the damage at Westport that the building has had to be demolished, the Postal Department now carrying on its business at the Public Works office until a new building is erected.

* Garage and store.