

Miscellaneous.—The separate wooden public-telephone cabinets which had been in use for a number of years outside the chief post-office building, Auckland, were replaced by two sets of cabinets constructed of bronze.

At Dunedin, excavation in connection with building operations on the land adjoining the automatic telephone-exchange building made it imperative to strengthen the foundations of the exchange building.

At Kurow, Lincoln, Little River, Waikari, and Woodlands the postal business was separated from the railway business, separate accommodation for the post-office being provided in each case in the railway-station building. The cost of the necessary alterations to the railway-station premises was borne by the Post and Telegraph Department.

In December the railway-station premises at Kurow, in which the post-office was conducted, were destroyed by fire. Consideration is now being given to the question of erecting a separate post-office building. In the meantime the post-office is accommodated in temporary premises.

Extensive alterations were made to the accommodation occupied by the Savings-bank Branch of the Chief Post-office, Wellington, in order to relieve congestion in the public space and to facilitate the transaction of business.

Improved strong-room accommodation was provided in the General Post Office building.

OVERSEAS MAILS.

The R.M.M.S. "Aorangi" and R.M.S. "Niagara" continue to carry mails under contract between Auckland and Vancouver, and the R.M.S. "Makura" and "Tahiti" continue to carry mails under contract between Wellington and San Francisco.

The average times of transmission of mails during the year were as follow: Auckland to London (via Vancouver), 30·8 days; London to Auckland (via Vancouver), 30·8 days; Wellington to London (via San Francisco), 29·5 days; London to Wellington (via San Francisco), 31·4 days.

The contracts for the two services expired on the 31st March, 1929, but it was arranged with the contractor (the Union Steam Ship Co. of New Zealand, Ltd.) for the contracts to be extended for a further term of one year—*i.e.*, to the 31st March, 1930.

INLAND MAIL-SERVICES.

The South Island mail-service contracts were relet in the latter part of 1928, the services in the Invercargill Postal District undergoing greater change than those in any other part of the South Island. The result has been increased efficiency at a reduced cost.

In July, 1928, the railway-line between Paeroa and Tauranga was completed, connecting the latter place and the districts east thereof with the main railway system. The completion of this work enabled the Department to despatch mails for Tauranga and the Bay of Plenty district the whole distance by train, thus rendering unnecessary the two main trunk road services between Waihi and Tauranga, and Rotorua and Whakatane. With the making of other changes of a minor nature an improvement has been effected in the general mail-service arrangements of the districts concerned.

In November, 1928, floods in the Wairarapa and Manawatu districts dislocated mail-service arrangements to some extent. Interruptions were caused in the service between Levin and Foxton; and, owing to the blocking of the Manawatu Gorge by a large slip, considerable delays occurred in the despatch of mails between the Manawatu and the Wairarapa and Hawke's Bay districts.

In November, 1928, a mail-car engaged in the performance of the Palmerston North - Tangimoana mail-service caught fire. A mail-bag and a number of private bags belonging to settlers were destroyed.

In June, 1928, a separate contract was entered into under which parcels for Wairoa, which were formerly despatched irregularly by sea, usually about once a week, are forwarded overland daily. The new facility removed a certain amount of discontent which had existed in Wairoa because of the lack of a regular parcel exchange.

The schooner "Elsie Mary" while on a trip from Gisborne to Auckland had to be abandoned on the 18th March, 1929, off the Aldermen Islands. Besides general cargo, the vessel carried five hampers of mail-matter. The mails were lost with the vessel.

RURAL DELIVERIES.

Requests for the establishment of rural mail-services have been numerous in the Invercargill Postal District, and the more settled southern areas of the country now have a network of rural deliveries, most of which are daily in frequency. The farmers of Southland fully appreciate the great advantage of being able to transact postal business at or near the gates of their homesteads.

There are now in the Dominion over 19,000 settlers who are rural box-holders.

"HOUSEHOLDER" CIRCULARS.

The revenue from "Householder" circulars posted during the year was £11,511, as against £7,384 for the previous twelve months. The number of "Householder" circulars posted was 5,697,714.