

MONEY-ORDERS.

During the year 833,505 orders, amounting to £5,069,629, were issued. This represented a decrease compared with the previous year of 1,853 in number and £117,924 in value.

The commission amounted to £35,603 19s. 9d., an increase of £9,930 11s. 7d.

BRITISH POSTAL ORDERS.

British postal-order business again increased slightly, 162,274 orders, of a value of £90,794 19s. 2d., being sold, as against 157,377 orders, of a value of £88,057 15s. 4d., for the previous year. The number of orders paid was 32,934, of a value of £19,000, compared with 34,687, of a value of £20,264, paid during the previous year.

POSTAL NOTES.

The postal-note service continues to be freely used. The number of postal notes issued was 90,653 greater than in the previous year, and the value increased by £5,361.

The sales for the year were 3,907,288 postal notes, of a value of £1,128,807, against 3,816,635, of a value of £1,123,446, during the previous year.

The commission totalled £26,033 5s. 9d., an increase of £321 17s. 9d. on the commission earned in the previous year.

SAVINGS-BANK.

The deposits amounted to £24,531,569, and the withdrawals to £28,063,338, an excess of withdrawals of £3,531,769. The interest credited to depositors was £1,763,825, and the total amount at the credit of depositors at the end of the year was £47,668,547.

POST OFFICE INVESTMENT CERTIFICATES.

Post Office Investment Certificates provide a regular avenue of investment for people of small means who desire the slightly higher rate of interest offered by a fixed deposit.

The certificates are issued for one, two, and five years currency, respectively.

The total sales since 1st September, 1927, the date on which the new issue was first available, amount to £2,443,214, of which £713,433 was sold during the financial year 1930-31.

UNEMPLOYMENT ACT, 1930.

The Unemployment Act of 1930, which came into force on the 11th October, required the registration of all male persons over twenty years of age. This work was entrusted to the Post Office. The work of registration and the subsequent issue of coupon-books to the persons liable under the Act to pay the levy has entailed a considerable amount of work, which may be appreciated by the fact that the registrations numbered approximately 462,700. In addition, the Department collects a quarterly levy of 7s. 6d., the amount collected up to the 31st March being £280,830.

The Department also pays the amount due for wages, &c., under the different unemployment relief schemes. Up to the 31st March vouchers totalling £255,000 have been paid.

It has also been required in many cases that Postmasters act as Government representatives on local unemployment committees, and in this capacity the calls upon the time of Postmasters have been many and varied.

TELEGRAPH AND TOLL SERVICES.

INLAND TELEGRAM RATES.

In view of the progressive loss sustained in the maintenance and operation of the inland telegraph service, it was found necessary to bring under exhaustive review the scale of inland telegraph charges. This loss has been accentuated by the sudden drop of telegraph traffic due to depressed conditions in business circles in the Dominion. It was considered that the only practicable method of reducing this progressive loss was by increasing the telegraph rates, and, accordingly, increased rates were brought into operation on the 1st March. In addition to this increase in charges the Department has exhausted every process of reducing the overhead cost of maintaining the service. It is yet too early to gauge to what extent the increase in rates will reduce the heavy loss sustained in past years in conducting the inland telegraph service.