

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE POST AND TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT FOR THE YEAR 1930-31.

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1931.
NEW ZEALAND.

POST AND TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT

(REPORT OF THE) FOR THE YEAR 1930-31.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

To His Excellency the Right Honourable Baron Bledisloe, P.C., G.C.M.G.,
K.B.E.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

I have the honour to submit to Your Excellency the report of the Post and Telegraph Department for the year ended 31st March, 1931.

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS.

The revenue collected during the year exceeded that for the previous year by £65,800. The sum received was £3,707,420, compared with £3,641,620 for 1929-30.

The working-expenses amounted to £3,304,648, while an amount of £400,000 was invested for the purpose of renewal and replacement of existing assets, thus leaving a balance of receipts over payments of £2,772. The amount of uninvested funds carried forward was £55,670.

Interest on capital liability, which is included in the working-expenses, totalled £504,000, an increase of £23,000 on the amount paid for the previous year.

SAVINGS-BANK.

The withdrawals from the Post Office Savings-bank exceeded the deposits by £3,531,769, the respective figures being £28,063,338 and £24,531,569. The interest credited to depositors was £1,763,825, so that the accumulated funds decreased by £1,767,944. The sum at the credit of depositors is now £47,668,547, the *per capita* average for the Dominion being £31·51.

HAWKE'S BAY EARTHQUAKE.

The earthquake in Hawke's Bay on the 3rd February had a most disastrous effect on the Department's communication systems and on departmental buildings and plant in the affected area. The capital loss to the Department is estimated at not less than £175,000. The capital value of telegraph and telephone equipment totally destroyed is estimated at £52,000; while the cost of restoring telephone and telegraph equipment partially destroyed will in all probability reach £25,000. The cost of reconditioning the Napier Chief Post-office building, of replacing the damaged portion of the Hastings building, of erecting a new post-office building at Port Ahuriri, and of repairing damage to other buildings is estimated at £50,000. The Department was also involved in expenditure or loss in numerous other ways, such as the destruction or abandonment of other buildings and property, the

provision of temporary accommodation for various departmental activities, movement of staff, and the undertaking of many special services necessitated by the earthquake. It is fortunate that the cost of renewing and replacing damaged property and equipment can be provided out of the depreciation reserve fund established under the Post and Telegraph Act, 1927.

Immediately news was received of the dislocation of the communication services action was taken to provide emergency telegraph and telephone services. In this connection, the latest developments of the communication art, in the form of short-wave radio-telegraphy, carrier current telephony, and multiplex machine-printing telegraph circuits, were brought into operation as speedily as circumstances permitted.

Details in connection with the disaster, as it affected my Department, are at pages 11 to 15 of this Report.

STAFF.

The efficiency of the Service has continued unimpaired, notwithstanding that economic conditions made it necessary for expenditure to be cut to a minimum during the year. The existing economic depression first made itself evident in the Department's business for October; and, in furtherance of the strict oversight of all expenditure that was already being observed, steps were taken for the payment of overtime to be discontinued, as a temporary measure, in favour of a system of granting "time off" to officers for extra time worked. This system, which has before been adopted in times of economic strain, affords a means of absorbing the services of permanent officers who would otherwise be supernumerary when business falls away, and makes it unnecessary to consider the terminating of their services, with all the hardship that entails. The falling-off in business later became more pronounced, and the need for economy in general Government expenditure so pressing that, in accordance with a Government decision having application to all Departments of the Public Service, it was necessary to invite the retirement of a number of officers who were eligible to receive superannuation. The need for parting with many efficient officers of long and faithful service and for effecting retirements at short notice is regretted; but it will be recognized that this was an alternative to much more drastic action—the paying-off, from the lower ranks, of officers who are not yet eligible to receive a pension on retiring, many of them officers with families.

Consistent with the paramount need always of providing an efficient service, every possible avenue of effecting staff savings continues to be explored.

The Department's officers in the area affected by the serious earthquake in Hawke's Bay on the 3rd February (see page 15) were severely tried in the disturbance, and many had terrifying experiences in escaping from buildings which were wholly or partly shaken down by the earth movement. The only casualty suffered by the Department's staff was the death from shock of a Telegraphist at Napier immediately following his escape from the post-office building. It speaks wonderfully for the ideal of service that imbues officers that in terrifying circumstances they so efficiently and so promptly restored departmental facilities, and carried cheerfully the extraordinarily heavy load of business, particularly telegraph business, that obtained for some days. It must be appreciated that officers worked long hours under most adverse conditions at a time when their families in many cases required the father's presence, and in some cases when casualties had been sustained by the family; and my tribute to the self-sacrificing spirit of officers which was evident on all sides is no less a tribute to the wives who carried on alone in the absence of the husbands for long hours on duty. As promptly as possible arrangements were made for the relief and release for a week's special leave of the officers who rendered such excellent service, and transfers to other offices were made when these were desired and could be arranged. In this way the Department was able to give some recognition of the services rendered.

Besides creating an unprecedented volume of traffic, the earthquake most seriously affected the Department's communication systems. To overtake the rush of work and to effect the reconstruction necessary a large relief staff required to be maintained in both Hastings and Napier; and in the confused conditions obtaining it was necessary for the Department to provide bunk-house accommodation and meals for the staff for some time.

INCREASED POST AND TELEGRAPH RATES AND CHARGES.

The urgent need for obtaining additional revenue to assist in balancing the Budget for 1931-32 made it necessary for postage rates and charges to be increased. The increases were imposed from the 1st March, 1931.

The increases in the parcel-post rates were necessitated partly by the increased charges levied by the Railway Department, on the recommendation of the Railways Commission, for the carriage of mails by rail. At the same time it was decided to revert to the old maximum weight of 11 lb. for parcels. Apart from the fact that the Railway Department provides adequate facilities for the carriage of parcels over 11 lb. in weight, the Post Office could not afford to continue to accept such parcels at rates that would enable the business to be retained.

Coincidentally with the postage increases, it was decided also to effect an increase in telegraph rates. For some years past there has been a large and increasing loss on the working of the Telegraph Branch, due to the fact that the rates were not nearly commensurate with the cost of operation. Rigid economy has been practised and labour-saving apparatus introduced; and, despite this, it has been found impossible to reduce the losses to any appreciable extent. For the year ended on the 31st March, 1930, the loss was approximately £134,000. With such a deficit the continuance of the old rates could not be justified in the conditions obtaining.

COMMERCIAL BRANCH.

The establishment of the Commercial Branch in March, 1930—a further step in the application of business methods to State enterprise—has been more than justified by the results achieved. The Commercial Branch officers are virtually the Department's commercial travellers, and, in their journeyings during the year, have been successful in bringing in to the Department's coffers no less than £32,000 in business (annual value), most of which would not otherwise have been obtained. But not only do Business Managers bring in more revenue; they also act in telephone matters as guides, counsellors, and friends to the general public, in that they render services at times for which no additional revenue is forthcoming.

The activities of the branch, which at the outset were confined to increasing the number of telephone subscribers and to advancing the sale of miscellaneous telephone equipment, have latterly been extended to the field of advertising, in that the work of obtaining advertisements for the various telephone directories has been undertaken.

Having regard to the general depression experienced during the year, and to the infancy of the branch, the success achieved is the more remarkable; and it is reasonable to expect that with the return of normal times the additional revenue brought in will be even greater.

In the light of the year's working there can be no doubt that an increase in the number of telephone subscribers can be fostered by means of the best in salesmanship methods. Undoubtedly the working of liaison officers between the Department and the public has served to lessen considerably the drop in telephone revenue which would otherwise have been experienced.

BUILDINGS.

Satisfactory progress continues to be made in the execution of the Department's building programme. The number of new buildings erected during the year was seven—four post-office buildings, one combined garage and store, and two residences for Postmasters. In addition, five small garages were erected, and increased or improved accommodation at a number of places was provided, the latter including the erection of additions of a major character to the Greymouth, Nelson, Newton (Auckland), and Whangarei Post-office buildings. A number of new buildings, also a substantial addition to the Masterton Post-office building, are under construction.

The earthquake of the 3rd February caused extensive damage to post-office buildings in the Hawke's Bay District. The new chief post-office building at Napier, which was completed and opened for business as recently as the 28th July, 1930, withstood the shock remarkably well, but was gutted by the fire which followed, the destruction of the town's supply of water preventing any attempt at saving the building. The post-office building at Port Ahuriri was badly damaged by the earthquake, and then completely destroyed by fire. At Hastings the clock-tower collapsed, and the old portion of the post-office building which carried the tower was so seriously damaged that it had to be demolished. In the case of the Wairoa Post-office building, the clock-tower collapsed and the building itself suffered extensively. Other departmental buildings in the district, notably the Waipukurau Post-office building, suffered more or less severely from the earthquake.

Pending the replacement of the building at Port Ahuriri and the reconditioning and re-erection, respectively, of the buildings at Napier and Hastings, the Department's business at those places is being conducted in temporary premises. Except at Hastings, the arrangements which have been made meet present requirements fairly well. In the case of Hastings the volume of business is practically as great as it was before the earthquake, and it is necessary that proper accommodation be provided as early as possible. Steps are accordingly being taken to this end.

In recent years the policy has been to exclude clock-towers from new post-office buildings, owing principally to the additional expenditure which is involved in strengthening a building sufficiently to carry a clock-tower; also, because it has been found that, owing to the nature of the structural work which is required to support a clock-tower, the space on each floor below the tower cannot be utilized to advantage; that the existence of the heavy structural work creates a difficulty in the event of alterations or additions to a building being required; and that the reverberations from the chiming and striking of the clock cause considerable annoyance to persons working in and around the building, and, especially at night, to officers and their families who are required to reside on the premises. In addition, it was considered that a clock-tower on a building constituted a menace in the event of an earthquake; and this has, unhappily, been confirmed by the Department's experience in the Hawke's Bay and West Coast disturbances. It has been established that, in the case of the post-office buildings at Hastings, Wairoa, and Westport, the presence of clock-towers contributed largely to the damage caused to the buildings, and proved a grave menace to the safety of officers and of members of the public. In the light of this experience, action is being taken with a view to either strengthening or dismantling the clock-towers on a number of post-office buildings, and so to remove any possible danger of collapse in time of earthquake.

It is anticipated that the erection of the new building at Wellington, which is to replace the Courtenay Place Post-office building, will be sufficiently advanced by September next to permit of the post-office being transferred to the new premises.

Since the end of the financial year the erection of new post-office buildings at Palmerston (Otago), Ruatoria (also residence), Urenui, and Waitara, has been completed. Satisfactory progress is being made with the erection of new buildings at High Street (Christchurch), and Upper Symonds Street (Auckland).

Work has been commenced on the erection of a new building at Westport in replacement of the chief post-office building which was destroyed by the earthquake of June, 1929. It is anticipated that the work will be completed about the end of 1931.

The foundations for the proposed new chief post-office building at Dunedin have been completed. Plans and specifications for the building itself, have also been completed, and tenders are soon to be invited for the erection of the building.

MAIL-SERVICES.

Inland mail-services have been maintained with but little interference, except that the Hawke's Bay earthquake resulted in an interruption for several weeks of the Napier-Wairoa section of the Napier-Gisborne service. In order to provide an outlet for Gisborne and Wairoa it was necessary for a period to despatch mails via Rotorua and the Motu Gorge.

The contracts for the mail-services in the North Island were relet from the 1st January, 1931. A reduction in the annual subsidies of approximately £4,500 was effected, notwithstanding that a number of important improvements in services was arranged. One of the principal improvements was the establishing of a night mail-service by road between Napier and Gisborne. With this service Gisborne receives mails within twenty-four hours of their despatch from Wellington.

The South Island mail-service contracts will be relet from the 1st January, 1932.

An alteration in the railway service between Invercargill and Dunedin has made it necessary to establish a twice-weekly road mail-service between those two places to run during the time the daily express service by rail between Christchurch and Invercargill is reduced to thrice-weekly.

The Westport-Karamea and the Nelson-Lyell-Westport road services, which were affected by the West Coast earthquake of June, 1929, were restored to the old routes during the year.

During the year tenders were invited for the conveyance of mails by air once daily between Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin, the payment stipulated being at the rate of 3d. an ounce, less a deduction of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to cover post-office expenses. None of the tenders received were for the performance of the service on the stipulated terms, and therefore a service by air was not established.

The contract for the conveyance of mails between Bluff and Melbourne, which expired on the 28th January, was not renewed.

In August, the "Tahiti," a contract vessel in the Wellington-San Francisco service, foundered when 400 miles from Rarotonga, on the north-bound voyage. The mails were transferred to the "Ventura," and reached London on due date. It is a matter for congratulation that almost the whole of the letter mails on the ship were salvaged, as otherwise great inconvenience would have been caused, particularly to the commercial community; and those responsible on the ship are deserving of every credit for their splendid performance in face of considerable difficulty and danger.

Otherwise the contract services Wellington-San Francisco and Auckland-Vancouver were performed without interruption during the year. The contracts for these two services expired on the 31st March, 1931. A further extension of the contracts for twelve months has been arranged for at reduced subsidies of £18,000 for the Vancouver service and £22,500 for the San Francisco service.

"CHARITY" STAMP.

A "Charity" stamp was again placed on sale during the year. The gross proceeds from sales amounted to £1,730, compared with about £5,000 for the previous year. The stamp was of the same design as that for the previous year as unavoidable but unforeseen delay occurred in arranging for a new stamp. It is proposed to make a further appeal this year, and to use a stamp of new design.

PICTORIAL STAMPS.

It has been decided to issue a series of pictorial stamps for the Dominion of approximately fifteen denominations. Some time will elapse before the stamps are available. Competitive designs have been invited, and these will be adjudicated upon by a special Board, on which there will be representatives of art as well as of the Government Departments concerned.

The current series of postage stamps of New Zealand—the "King George" issue—was introduced in 1915.

COMMISSION ON PURCHASES OF STAMPS BY LICENSED VENDORS.

As an economy measure the payment of commission on purchases of stamps by licensed vendors was abolished from the 1st February, 1931. The saving is estimated at £3,000 per annum.

CABLE SERVICES.

The Dominion continues to be efficiently represented by Mr. M. B. Esson on the Advisory Committee representing the Mother-country, the dominions, and colonies which was set up in connection with the cables and wireless merger to which reference was made last year. Government since the merger did not cease to press for a reduction in the cable rates from New Zealand to the United Kingdom and Ireland; and it is now recorded that these representations, so ably pressed home by Mr. Esson, have at last borne fruit. Previously a full-rate cable message between New Zealand and Great Britain or Ireland cost 1s. 11d. a word. The charge from the 1st January is 1s. 8d. a word, with corresponding reductions in cheap-rate messages.

TELEPHONE-EXCHANGE SERVICES.

The general experience in other countries indicates that the telephone business is one of the last to suffer from the effects of business depressions and one of the first to recover when conditions improve. As it was not until the closing portion of the year that any falling-off in the net increase of subscribers became evident, this is the experience also in New Zealand; and it is hoped that the general experience will be further exemplified by a speedy return to the developmental conditions which have characterized the telephone service during the past few years.

Continuous study is devoted to improving and modernizing the facilities provided by the telephone service, while keeping the cost as low as possible both to the public and to the Department. The improvements in long-distance communication and methods of operating that have been effected in the telephone service of the Dominion as a result of the application of the most advanced methods have increased the utility of the telephone very considerably, and have enabled a much superior service to be furnished without increase in cost to the user. In this way, the telephone is becoming an increasingly useful adjunct to the business and social world. The gradual extension of automatic-telephone service has been steadily proceeded with until at the present time New Zealand has in use a greater proportion of automatic telephones than any other country.

CARRIER-CURRENT TELEPHONY.

The development of long-distance telephone communication within the Dominion, which has been a feature of the Department's policy in recent years, has been advanced a further stage by the opening for commercial traffic of a number of additional carrier circuits between the principal centres and other important towns.

The installation of the additional carrier-current systems, besides effecting a substantial improvement in the speech efficiency, stability, and reliability of the network of long-distance telephone-lines throughout the Dominion, has improved the service generally by relieving the congestion of traffic between certain of the larger centres, thus appreciably reducing the delays on long-distance toll communications. The facilities now provided enable practically all the important centres to obtain reliable telephonic communication amongst themselves at all hours.

In the South Island the efficiency of the network of long-distance telephone communication was further enhanced by the installation at Tinaru of voice-frequency amplifiers. By means of this additional equipment, two high-grade telephone circuits have been made available between Christchurch and Dunedin. Similar apparatus has also been installed at Christchurch and Wellington which, together with the additional carrier equipment, has resulted in a marked improvement in the volume, clarity, and reliability of the long-distance conversations over the various circuits with which the equipment is connected.

RADIO TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE SERVICES.

The institution of a radio-telephone service between New Zealand and Australia has been the principal radio development since the last report. This is also the most far-reaching venture to date in the sphere of the Department's radio operations. The installation work in the Dominion and the necessary testing were

carried out by departmental officers. Although the service is not being availed of as extensively as could be wished—a condition probably accounted for to some extent by the present financial depression—the number of commendatory letters received by the Department from satisfied users bears ample evidence that the facilities for telephoning to and from Australia are much appreciated. The ultimate aim is the extension of the present service to include the United Kingdom and other countries so as to bring the great majority of the world's telephone subscribers within telephonic reach of New Zealand users.

The inclusion of Rarotonga in the direct radio-telegraph services from New Zealand has enabled a reduction to be made in the charges on messages between those two points as well as in delay in the handling of such traffic.

In connection with the Hawke's Bay earthquake on the 3rd February, radio played a prominent part, both in conveying information as to the extent of the disturbance and in furnishing auxiliary communication services. In this connection ship stations and certain amateur radio stations performed valuable service during the early stages when other services were temporarily dislocated. A detailed account of the radio operations connected with the earthquake disaster is given in this report at pages 11 and 12.

BROADCASTING.

On the 31st March, 1931, there was a total of 62,713 radio-receiving licenses, compared with 53,407 on the 31st March, 1930. The continued increase in the number of licensees is adequate proof of the increasing popularity of radio broadcast entertainment.

A feature of the broadcasting service during the past year has been the increased number of overseas broadcasts. Many notable events of world-wide interest which have taken place in other parts of the world have been re-broadcast from the New Zealand stations.

The contract with the Radio Broadcasting Co. expires at the end of 1931. The whole question of broadcasting is now being reviewed.

TELEPHONE DIRECTORIES.

As a measure of economy it has been decided to issue telephone directories yearly instead of every six months. It is estimated that a saving of between £5,000 and £6,000 per annum will result from this alteration. Under the new arrangement lists of additions and other amendments to directories will be issued to subscribers six months after each directory is distributed.

OFFICE OF POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

The office of Postmaster-General and Minister of Telegraphs was again assumed by myself on the 29th May, 1930.

I have the honour to be,
Your Excellency's most obedient servant,
JAS. B. DONALD.

General Post Office, Wellington,
27th June, 1931.

STAFF.

In sympathy with the general depression a falling-off in the Department's business became particularly noticeable in the returns for October; and, although the reduction had been anticipated and in consequence staffs had been kept at a minimum, it was necessary when the reduction took full effect to take exceptional methods of reducing expenditure on staff. The first step was to cancel the payment of overtime and substitute the system of granting "time off" for hours worked in excess of the regulation forty-four per week, and for Sunday and holiday duty, the new arrangement applying from the 8th December. Action was next taken, in accordance with a general Government decision, to arrange the retirement of a number of long-service officers who were eligible to receive superannuation, 105 ceasing active duty in the first three months of 1931. These two actions enabled the Department to absorb a number of officers who had become supernumerary as a result of reduced business. Arrangements were also made to amalgamate with the clerical branches of the chief post-offices the stores branches at Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin, this enabling important staff savings to be made. From the 1st April, 1931, it is intended to place the Wellington Telegraph Office under the control of the Chief Postmaster, and this will make possible a further substantial saving. The Telegraph Offices at the four centres, which until a few years ago were under separate control, will then have been brought under the control of the Chief Postmaster in each case.

In the table published below it will be observed that the staff of casual employes has been considerably reduced during the year. Construction works initiated last year have been completed, and very few new works have been authorized; and, consequently, the need for a large casual staff has vanished.

It is pleasing to be able to acknowledge the whole-hearted manner in which officers of all ranks have assisted in practising the economy that is so necessary at the present juncture. Officers quickly appreciated the position, and many valuable suggestions for effecting savings were submitted. It has been possible to adopt a number with a resultant saving in men and money.

A great deal of additional work was thrown upon officers during the year by the Department being required to take registrations, to accept payments of levy, and to make wages payments under the Unemployment Act of 1930. Additionally, Postmasters are in many cases required to act as Government representatives on local Unemployment Committees and as certifying officers in respect of payments made under the Act. It is gratifying to record that the manner in which Postmasters and other officers have carried out the many and varied duties required of them in connection with unemployment has been the subject of favourable comment by the Unemployment Board.

In the unexampled stress of work that arose in connection with the severe earthquake in Hawke's Bay in February, officers cheerfully undertook without complaint long and arduous duties, and performed them in a manner that could not have been bettered. Full particulars are given in the report of the earthquake, which commences on page 11.

COMPARATIVE RETURN OF PERSONS EMPLOYED IN THE DEPARTMENT.

The total number of persons employed on the 1st April, 1930 and 1931, was as under:—

	1st April, 1930.	1st April, 1931.
Permanent staff—		
Administrative Division	4	4
Clerical and Engineering Divisions	3,485	3,484
General Division	5,456	5,413
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	8,945	8,901
Temporary staff	76	53
Casual staff	698	265
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	9,719	9,219
Non-permanent staff—		
Country Postmasters and Telephonists	1,786	1,710
Postmasters who are Railway officers	86	83
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	11,591	11,012

HEALTH OF PERMANENT STAFF.

The following table gives the average absence of officers on sick-leave this year as compared with last:—

	Number on Staff.	Average Absence per Sick Officer.	Average Absence for each Officer employed.
Year ended 31st March, 1931—			
Men	8,151	10.5	4.22
Women	750	14.29	7.9
Year ended 31st March, 1930—			
Men	8,198	9.62	4.98
Women	747	16.05	10.10

The figures indicate that the health of the staff has been well maintained.

Thirty-one officers died during the year, six as a result of accidents while on duty. Although accidents of a minor nature are not unusual in the Department, it can be said that fatalities are not of frequent occurrence, and, in this respect, the year was an exceptional and unfortunate one. Three of the fatalities resulted from collisions between cyclists and motor-cars, while two were caused by motor-trucks overturning. The sixth death was caused by the electrocution of a Line Foreman of several years' experience who was in charge of a party engaged in the removal of telegraph-lines, one of which on becoming loose contacted with a power-line. The Line Foreman grasped the loose wire and was killed instantly. The happening was adjudged to be entirely accidental. Another death resulted from shock as a result of the Hawke's Bay earthquake, a Napier officer dropping dead soon after vacating the post-office building.

PAYMENT TO DEPENDANTS OF DECEASED OFFICERS.

There has been no departure from the policy of the Department in arranging the payment of compassionate allowances to the widows of deceased officers and of arranging for monetary payments equivalent to the leave due at the time of decease. During the year £634 was paid by way of compassionate allowance.

PERSONAL.

Mr. H. D. Edwards, Controller of Savings-banks and Accounts, retired on the 14th May, after completing forty years' service. He was succeeded by Mr. A. Marshall, Assistant Controller of Savings-banks and Accounts; Mr. Marshall, in turn, being replaced by Mr. P. Cutforth, Inspector, Land and Income Tax Department.

It is recorded with regret that while on a tour abroad, in December, Mr. Edwards died suddenly.

REDUCTION IN SALARIES.

Under the provisions of the Finance Act, 1931, which is to come into operation on the 1st April, 1931, all salaries, wages, allowances, and other forms of emolument of officers are to be reduced by 10 per cent.

GENERAL DIVISION SALARY SCHEDULE.

The new salary schedule for male officers of the General Division, to which reference was made in last year's report, came into operation on the 1st April, 1930, and resulted in the salary conditions of 2,800 officers being improved. Although the main object of the schedule was to increase the salaries of the lower-paid officers, provision was made for tradesmen who were at the maximum of the rank-and-file class to be advanced by £25 per annum, and thirty-eight officers received immediate benefit under this clause.

APPEAL BOARD.

The Post and Telegraph Appeal Board, under the chairmanship of Mr. E. C. Cutten, the senior Stipendiary Magistrate at Auckland, held only one session during the year. Appeals from fifty-eight officers were dealt with and resulted as follows: Appeals allowed, 2; appeals disallowed, 84; appeals did not lie, 19; appeals withdrawn, 57. The appeals lodged were, with few exceptions, against non-promotion.

Sittings were held at Auckland, Palmerston North, Wellington, and Christchurch.

PROMOTION BOARD ELECTION.

A Promotion Board election, held on the 18th February, resulted in the re-election of Mr. H. M. Patrick as the elective member of the Board. Two officers contested the election.

DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL.

The instructional school, which provides tuition by correspondence for officers who desire to extend their knowledge of departmental matters and improve their general education, continues to be an important factor in making for efficiency within the Service. There were 1,273 enrolments in the school during the year. The majority of the students were successful at the various departmental examinations for which they presented themselves.

EXAMINATIONS.

The number of officers who entered for departmental efficiency examinations held during the year was 2,543. The candidates that were either wholly or partially successful numbered 1,316.

POST AND TELEGRAPH OFFICERS' GUILD.

Official recognition has been accorded to a new organization, known as the Post and Telegraph Officers' Guild, which was formed during the year. The membership of the Guild is open to all officers of the Department in receipt of salaries of £320 and over.

HAWKE'S BAY EARTHQUAKE, FEBRUARY, 1931.

The most disastrous earthquake in the history of New Zealand occurred in the Hawke's Bay District on the 3rd February, 1931, at 10.47 a.m. Departmental buildings and plant were seriously damaged, and post and telegraph services interrupted.

Telegraph and telephone communication was lost within the whole of the area bounded approximately by Dannevirke in the south, Gisborne in the north, and Taupo in the north-west, the principal offices concerned being Napier and Hastings. Rail communication was interrupted temporarily, but, fortunately, it was possible at all times to maintain road communication south of Napier. The road between Napier and Wairoa was obliterated in a number of places, but Wairoa was able to maintain communication through Gisborne.

The Napier Chief Post-office building, a three-storied structure which was completed last year at a cost of £52,745, withstood the earthquake shocks, but was gutted by the fire which followed and swept the business area of the town; the Port Ahuriri Post-office building was badly damaged and then destroyed by fire; at Hastings the clock-tower of the post-office building collapsed and damaged the old portion of the building to such an extent that it required to be demolished: the clock-tower of the Wairoa building collapsed, causing the collapse of a portion of the roof and of the front wall of the building; and a number of other post-office buildings, notably the Waipukurau building, were damaged more or less seriously.

The first reports of the disaster reached Wellington by wireless messages from the s.s. "Northumberland" and "Taranaki" anchored off Napier, the "Taranaki" immediately following her transmission by giving general information as to the position so far as it could be seen from the roadstead in a message received at Wellington Radio at 11.10 a.m. Later these reports were supplemented by information furnished by H.M.S. "Veronica," lying at the wharf at Port Ahuriri. Immediately the Department made effective use of its telegraph and telephone system in organizing the despatch to the area of doctors and nurses.

RESTORATION OF COMMUNICATIONS.

Radio Communication.—Amateur radio stations rendered valuable service in supplementing means of communication as soon as possible after the earthquake. Efforts were at once made by the Department's Wellington radio station to establish communication with amateur radio stations at Napier and Hastings. The first indication of success in this connection was at 3.45 p.m., when a message from the Postmaster, Hastings, transmitted by a Hastings amateur station was picked up by a Wellington amateur station. Efforts to gain further contact with the Hastings amateur at that time were unsuccessful, but soon after 5 p.m. the Hastings station was heard working with a Gisborne amateur station, by whose assistance contact was arranged. By 7 p.m. Wellington-Radio succeeded in establishing communication with the Hastings amateur radio station already referred to, and important messages were exchanged until land-line connections were restored.

At about 4 p.m. on the 3rd another amateur station at Wellington reported having established contact with a Napier amateur station. The Department assumed control of both stations, placing departmental officers in charge, and the two stations exchanged a large number of urgent messages until the Wellington station was released at 4.20 p.m. on the 4th February. The Napier station continued as an auxiliary official station until the 6th February, working direct with Wellington-Radio.

In addition to those amateurs already referred to who participated in the establishment of direct channels to Wellington, considerable assistance was rendered by other amateur radio stations at Gisborne, Wairoa, Auckland, Rotorua, and Wellington.

Short-wave transmitting and receiving equipment were hurried to the spot by representatives of radio firms and readily made available for departmental use as required. Short-wave equipment was installed early on the 4th February at the Hastings Street School as an official radio-station under the call sign "ZLN." Although on account of the prompt restoration of line circuits this station was not used to any extent, it provided a sense of security against the total loss of communication.

Telegraph and Telephone Lines.—Tests made at Wellington immediately after the earthquake showed that telegraph and telephone lines were interrupted north of Dannevirke and south of Taupo. Steps were at once taken by the engineering branch to organize the work of restoration. As a result a party was despatched from Dannevirke at noon direct for Takapau, to work northwards. Shortly afterwards a second party left Dannevirke to clear the section between Dannevirke and Takapau. A third party, consisting of two gangs, left Palmerston North for Waipukurau direct with tentative instructions to divide their forces and work north and south from Waipukurau. These parties were preceded by an Engineer and an Overseer with the object of ascertaining the nature of the damage and organizing the work of the several parties to the best advantage. In the meantime the local line staffs at Napier, Hastings, and Waipukurau, which were isolated from headquarters, commenced to do all in their power to restore the lines, particularly on the south side; and a party had also left Rotorua with instructions to restore communication on the Taupo-Napier route.

In the absence of specific information as to the extent of the dislocation, and in anticipation of more serious developments, a party of engineers, specially chosen by reason of their qualifications in certain phases of telegraph, telephone, and radio engineering, was at once organized at Wellington and despatched by motor transport with emergency materials.

The work of line-restoration was considerably complicated owing to the recurrence of contacts with successive tremors. In some cases the lines were broken by falling buildings; and many poles were shaken loose and angle poles straightened up. In a number of instances all the wires for many spans were twisted together, resembling a wire rope.

All lines up to Waipukurau—within thirty-three miles of Hastings—were restored at 4 p.m., and by 7.30 p.m. clear, though weak, speech was obtained by telephone between Waipukurau and Hastings, Morse operation being impracticable owing to line conditions. At 9.55 a.m. on the following day Morse communication over a shaky circuit was restored between Waipukurau and Hastings. At 11.35 a.m. direct Morse communication between Wellington and Hastings was established, and at short intervals thereafter further outlets were obtained as circuits were cleared and Morse sets wired. Telegraph communication was re-established between Napier and Hastings at about 9 a.m. on the 4th February. During the morning several outlets between Napier and Hastings were cleared, but, owing to the numerous tremors, they were subject to continual interruption. An improved simplex Morse circuit from Wellington to Hastings and Napier was obtained by 1 p.m., while the recovery of further circuits enabled duplex working to be accomplished by 4 p.m. The development of telegraph communications continued as rapidly as possible. By 10 a.m. on the 5th February a quadruplex set had been brought into service at Hastings, and by 5 p.m. on the same day two quadruplex sets had been installed at Napier. Four arms of the multiplex machine-printing telegraph system were then installed at Napier, and two were brought into operation at 6.20 p.m. on Sunday, the 8th February, when the Borough Council's emergency power-station commenced supplying electricity. At 2.45 p.m. the following day a full multiplex was working.

By 11.30 a.m. on the 5th February, the telegraph-line between Napier and Taupo was restored by a self-contained mobile party from the Auckland District, thus providing a Morse outlet from Napier to Auckland via Rotorua. At 5 p.m. the circuit was being worked duplex.

Between Napier and Wairoa the damage to roads and departmental telegraph and telephone lines was very severe, and telegraph communication between those points was not restored for several days. This was not, however, a serious state of affairs, as communication between Wairoa and Gisborne was re-established by 4.30 p.m. on the 3rd February. On the Napier-Wairoa section considerable damage was done to the pole-line, necessitating its diversion at several points. At Turiroa, a section of the main road had dropped 20 ft., and had moved 30 ft. out of line. At Matahoura Gorge the road was covered by landslides to a height of 30 ft. to 40 ft., and access to a section of line could only be obtained by linemen descending 250 ft. of almost sheer cliff. The lines were joined through temporarily by dropping braided bronze wire from the railway viaduct to the pole-line 280 ft. below. A shaky Morse connection between Napier and Wairoa was eventually obtained on the 9th February, and on the 11th one clear metallic circuit between those points was available. All the Napier-Wairoa circuits were restored by the evening of the 12th. A severe earthquake at 1.30 p.m. on the 13th caused further interruption, but a Morse wire was recovered at noon the following day and one metallic circuit by 5 p.m. All the lines between Napier and Wairoa were again cleared by the 17th February.

One Morse circuit between Wairoa and Gisborne was restored at 4.30 p.m. on the 3rd February. During the same evening the remaining Wairoa-Gisborne circuits were recovered. These circuits again suffered complete interruption by the earthquake on the 13th, but full recovery was effected within forty minutes.

Carrier-current Systems.—Owing to the interruptions of the lines and later the total destruction by fire of the equipment itself, the carrier-current systems operating from Napier were completely disrupted. Apparatus collected from various points was installed at the temporary telegraph office at Napier on the 11th February and provided separate outlets from Napier to Wellington, Auckland, Palmerston North, and Gisborne. Communication on the Napier-Wellington system was established at 7 p.m. on the 11th, but owing to faulty lines the Auckland, Palmerston North, and Gisborne circuits were not suitable for toll purposes until the 12th, 16th, and 25th February respectively. Although the earthquake on the 13th interrupted all physical lines, the carrier channel between Napier and Wellington continued in operation.

DISPOSAL OF TELEGRAPH TRAFFIC.

Owing to the disconnection of telegraph circuits, special measures were necessary to dispose of telegraph traffic to and from the affected area. The number of messages lodged for transmission for some days after the earthquake was enormous, and even had the circuits remained intact over the whole period it would not have been possible by means of telegraphic transmission to dispose of all the messages presented.

In addition to the use of radio channels as already mentioned, telegraph traffic from Napier and Hastings was, on the 3rd and 4th February, forwarded by road to Waipukurau and Dannevirke for transmission, Napier telegraphists being despatched to those stations to assist in the disposal of the traffic.

Arrangements were made on the afternoon of the 3rd for a telegram mail to be conveyed from Wellington to Hastings by aeroplane leaving Wellington early on the morning of the 4th. Messages for the district were copied and forwarded by aeroplane which left Wellington on the 4th at 6 a.m. and arrived at Hastings at 10 a.m. A regular service by aeroplane for the carriage of telegrams and important mail-matter was then established between Auckland, Gisborne, and Hastings, and between Wellington and Hastings; and this service continued until 9th February. During that period twenty-four aeroplane flights were made between Hastings and Wellington, and eight between Auckland and Hastings, calling at Gisborne *en route*, and, in addition, several flights were made between Gisborne, Wairoa, and Hastings.

It is regretfully added that a flight from Gisborne to Hastings on the 8th fatally terminated at Wairoa when an aeroplane piloted by Captain Kight crashed after dropping a mail, the pilot and the two passengers being killed.

In addition to the telegrams forwarded by aeroplane, thousands of messages were forwarded by motor-car between Napier, Hastings, and Wellington, the cars picking up and delivering batches of messages at offices *en route*.

The heavy traffic necessitated continuous telegraph attendance at Napier, Hastings, Wellington, Wairoa, Gisborne, and Auckland from the 3rd until the 10th February. Furthermore, a special attendance on Sunday, the 8th, was observed at Palmerston North, Dannevirke, and Wanganui. On the 11th February all offices reverted to normal telegraph attendance, except Hastings and Wairoa. Hastings since the 11th February has observed an attendance of from 8 a.m. to midnight, the transfer to Hastings on the 18th February of the Napier morning newspaper having made it necessary to observe the midnight attendance permanently. Wairoa reverted to normal attendance on the 19th February.

Owing to the departure of a large number of residents and to the abandoning of homes, the delivery of telegrams by message-boy at Napier and Hastings for the first few days was impossible, and telegrams for towns in the earthquake area were accepted only at the senders' risk. Until normal deliveries were re-established, telegrams were delivered on application at the temporary offices; but a very considerable number remained unclaimed.

RESTORATION OF PUBLIC FACILITIES, NAPIER.

Postal Branch.—As soon as it was seen that the chief post-office building could not escape the fire, as much material as possible was removed from it, and prompt measures were taken to obtain temporary premises. First, the band rotunda in Clive Square was occupied, but this had to be vacated to enable it to be used as a surgical operating-theatre. Accommodation was then obtained in the Railway Social Club room for branches other than the telegraph and the money-order and savings-bank, and business was being conducted in that location by 4 p.m. On the following day (the 4th) the money-order and savings-bank branch re-opened in the Wairere Bowling Club House. On the 6th those branches of the office which were being conducted in railway premises moved to the adjacent Hawke's Bay Farmers' Building; and the money-order and savings-bank branch was transferred to the same building on the 9th. These premises were used until the beginning of March, when all branches were transferred to the Hastings Street School, where, as explained later, the telegraph branch had been installed from the afternoon of the earthquake. The whole of the Department's business at Napier will continue to be conducted in the Hastings Street School until the post-office building is re-conditioned.

For some time after the earthquake the delivery of correspondence by postman was impossible, owing to the destruction of business premises and the abandonment of private residences, and delivery of mail-matter was made over the counter. A once-daily delivery by postman was resumed on the 6th March; and the usual full twice-daily delivery was resumed on the 17th idem.

Telegraph Branch.—The telegraph branch at Napier re-opened to the public on the 3rd February at about 6 p.m. in the Hastings Street School. The news that the telegraph office had re-opened had a very reassuring effect upon the inhabitants, and by 7 p.m. hundreds of people were at the temporary office writing messages on whatever scraps of paper could be obtained. As no telegraph outlet was available, the messages were despatched to Waipukurau and Dannevirke that evening by motor-car, together with telegraphists to assist in their disposal at the latter offices. The gradual development of the telegraph branch and the disposal of the heavy traffic are covered in a general way in other parts of this statement.

Telephone Exchange, Napier.—On the destruction of the telephone-exchange building and equipment by fire, action was at once taken to establish a temporary exchange in the Hastings Street School. The diversion of the lines to the new quarters was put in hand on the afternoon of the 3rd February. A 100-number switchboard arrived from Wellington on the 4th, and an emergency exchange was at once installed in the school, and connections made for the police, relief organizations, temporary hospitals, and other essential services. The efforts of the engineering staff to provide for essential services was splendidly seconded by men from the H.M.S. "Veronica," who assisted in piecing together wire circuits from the temporary exchange site to the Nelson Park hospital and other points. When everything possible had been done to furnish telephone connections for essential services, attention was turned to the more difficult task of preparing for the more extended telephone service which it was anticipated would be required as soon as conditions began to return to normal. To do this effectively and promptly and at a minimum cost, it was essential that a temporary building should be made available close to the main exchange manhole, upon which point all cables converged. With the concurrence of the Mayor and with the assistance of the Public Works Department in the demolition of adjacent menacing walls and the clearance of debris from the site, a galvanized-iron and wooden building was erected on the roadway immediately in front of the old telephone exchange. The building was ready for accommodation on the 22nd February. On the completion of the temporary building and main distributing frame, a large staff of cable-jointers commenced work, and the testing of underground telephone cables was put in hand. It was found that comparatively little trouble had been caused to cables. All aerial laterals in the fire-stricken area were, of course, destroyed; in addition, a 300-pair underground cable feeding Taradale and Westshore was fractured in places and saturated. A 50-pair cable along the Westshore embankment was broken at splices, and smaller underground cables were also affected. No damage appears to have been suffered by cables enclosed in ducts. The telephone-exchange service was transferred from the Hastings Street School on the 4th March, and from that date a more general service was made available. Prior to that date the service had been confined to emergency requirements and to the comparatively small number of subscribers in urgent need of connections.

RESTORATION OF PUBLIC FACILITIES, HASTINGS.

As soon as possible after the earthquake mail-matter, valuables, and other matter were salvaged from the damaged building and safeguarded. The first public demand was naturally for telegraphic communication, and the acceptance of telegrams was commenced on the 3rd February at the railway bus office (opposite the post-office). The following morning post-office business was commenced in the departmental lineman's shed in St. Aubyn Street: and the telegraph office was fully established at the railway-station. During Thursday, the 5th February, possession was taken of Clifton Commercial College—departmental property in St. Aubyn Street—the telegraph instruments remaining at the railway-station. It was soon recognized that the St. Aubyn Street premises were inconvenient and unsuitable for lengthy occupation, and other premises were sought. On the morning of the 10th February, all public branches at Hastings commenced operation in the Oddfellows' Hall, Market Street. The telegraph instruments were removed from the railway-station to the Oddfellows' Hall on the 22nd February.

A postman's delivery was made at Hastings on the afternoon of Thursday, the 5th February, prior to which time as much correspondence as possible had been delivered to callers. The postmen resumed their usual two deliveries daily on the 16th February, when all services were approaching normal.

Telephone Exchange.—The central battery telephone exchange at Hastings, which gave service to about two thousand subscribers, although put out of action by the destruction of the power plant and dislocation of the outside plant, was comparatively little damaged. It was, however, exposed to the weather due to the collapse of portions of the roof and walls of the portion of the building in which it was housed. Preliminary steps were taken for its preservation soon after the earthquake, and a little later greater protective measures were adopted. Four of the main 600-pair cables were damaged in the exchange manhole, which was filled with water from broken water services. Terminals and laterals in the business area were extensively damaged, but the outlying portions of the system on the whole suffered only minor damage. An emergency manual telephone exchange for essential services and for toll lines was established at the railway-station on the 6th February. On Sunday, the 22nd February, the connections with this emergency exchange were cut over to a provisional and more permanent exchange, capable of providing for one thousand subscribers, established in a storeroom at the back of the post-office building. The reconnection of subscribers was then put in hand with all speed.

In the new portion of the Hastings building the installation of a "Strowger" automatic exchange, to take the place of the central-battery system, was proceeding at the time of the earthquake. Fortunately, this apparatus escaped almost uninjured, but its erection was not sufficiently advanced to enable it to be brought into operation at the time. The work was accelerated, and the automatic exchange was brought into operation on the 31st May, 1931.

RESTORATION OF PUBLIC FACILITIES, PORT AHURIRI.

As the post-office building at Port Ahuriri was completely wrecked by the earthquake and later in the day swept by fire, the facilities provided by that office were totally interrupted. Pending the provision of other accommodation, a temporary office was established in the railway-station on the 4th February, and telegrams and mail-matter were carried between Port Ahuriri and Napier at frequent intervals. On the 25th February the office was transferred to a temporary galvanized-iron shed which had been erected on land adjoining the railway-station.

On the 23rd March Morse telegraph communication with Napier was restored, and two days later the toll service was restored.

MAILS AND MAIL-SERVICES.

The principal effect of the earthquake on mails and mail-services was the interruption of the Napier-Gisborne mail-service. There was very little other disorganization, except on the day of the earthquake.

On the 4th and 5th February at every opportunity mails were exchanged by motor-vehicle between Napier and the temporary rail-head at Waipukurau and intermediate offices. By midday on the 4th February the train service had been resumed as far north as Otane, by 2 p.m. on the 5th to Hastings, and later on the same day to Napier, each successive step lessening the use of motor-vehicles.

Napier-Gisborne Mail-service.—The ordinary time-table for this service provided for a service by lorry leaving both Napier and Gisborne at 7 p.m. daily, and arriving at destination at 5 a.m. the next day. From the 4th to the 11th February, inclusive, the Gisborne-Wairoa section of the service was performed daily in daylight, the road between those two places being in good order.

On the other hand, the section between Napier and Wairoa was totally interrupted on account of the road being impassable. The contractors made strenuous efforts from both the Wairoa and Napier ends to resume the service as soon as possible, but about a fortnight elapsed before that could be done. Even then only a service in daylight for letters was possible. On the 3rd March, the service was extended (still by daylight trip) to all mail matter except parcels, which were conveyed by sea as opportunity offered. The comprehensive night service was resumed in its entirety on the 21st April. During the period in which the Napier-Gisborne mail-service was disorganized mails to and from Gisborne, Wairoa, and other offices served from those places were exchanged by air (letter mails only): by sea as opportunity offered; and overland via Rotorua and the Motu Gorge (letter mails only).

SAVINGS-BANK FACILITIES.

It is a matter for congratulation that the whole of the savings-bank records were saved. The circumstances of many refugees from the earthquake area rendered it necessary to make special arrangements to enable them to operate on their savings-bank accounts. On the 5th February, it was arranged to pay at Palmerston North (where the principal refugee camp was established) and Wellington on demand in urgent cases sums up to £10 on production of pass-books. In cases in which money was not required urgently, applications for withdrawals up to the full amount at credit were accepted and transmitted to Napier or Hastings by post. Any refugee desiring to transfer his account from the Napier to any other district was permitted to do so, the fee for the service being waived. Furthermore, all pass-books lost as a result of the earthquake were replaced free.

STORES AND MOTOR TRANSPORT.

A very important factor in the early restoration of the Department's services was the prompt manner in which it was possible to despatch stores and material from Wellington.

Of great importance was the part played by the Department's motor fleet and staff; and the advantage in an emergency of having one central garage for Government vehicles was clearly demonstrated. A car was on its way to Hawke's Bay by 2 p.m. on the day of the earthquake. By 2.30 a.m. the following day nine vehicles from the central Government garage controlled by the Post and Telegraph Department in Wellington were *en route* to Napier, and during the day which followed the number engaged on the work increased to fourteen. During the first few days of the earthquake period, chauffeurs and vehicles were held in readiness to proceed to Hawke's Bay at a moment's notice at any hour of the day or night.

Many of the vehicles sent to Hastings and Napier did not immediately return to Wellington, but were utilized for the transport of medical supplies, provisions, water, and camp equipment for the inhabitants of Napier and Hastings, and thereafter for various departmental purposes in the affected area.

Four departmental vehicles stationed at Napier were destroyed in the fire following the earthquake.

FRANKING PRIVILEGES AND FREE TELEPHONES.

For the purpose of facilitating relief work, the Mayors of Napier and Hastings, the Member of Parliament for Napier, and Earthquake Relief Committees in several places were authorized to send inland telegrams free. The Y.M.C.A., which undertook particularly the work of dealing with inquiries for persons in the earthquake area, were authorized to send telegraphic replies free.

Thirty-six telephones were installed free of charge in premises occupied for relief purposes in several towns in the Dominion.

STAFF.

It is gratifying to record that no departmental officer was killed in the earthquake. It is recorded with regret, however, that Mr. F. C. McArthur, Telegraphist, died of shock shortly after making his exit from the Napier post-office building, and that Mr. H. P. Hopkins, Exchange-clerk, Waipawa, was severely injured.

It is impossible to exaggerate the value of the services rendered by officers under terrifying circumstances. For many days earthquake tremors continued alarmingly; and the mental strain under which officers laboured in performing long and strenuous hours of duty, in separation from their families, in many cases in the hours of darkness, will be appreciated. A number of officers, at no small risk to themselves, were instrumental in saving departmental records and property. With the severance of communications, an immediate and extremely heavy burden fell on the Department's line maintenance and construction staff, while the large volume of telegraphic traffic placed an unprecedented burden on the telegraph staffs in the area, staffs which were reinforced to the fullest extent by officers from other branches not so hard pressed.

As soon as the required arrangements could be made the Department arranged for the relief of officers for a week's special leave; and, in this way many were enabled to rejoin their evacuated families and to obtain much needed rest. To meet their own desires many were permanently transferred from the area, and a number were granted temporary transfers.

At many offices outside the affected area officers were also required to perform arduous and lengthy hours of duty in effecting the transmission of telegrams and toll traffic to and from Hawke's Bay. They cheerfully worked at high pressure until traffic assumed normal proportions.

Owing to the absence of accommodation at Napier and Hastings, it devolved upon the Department to provide bunk-house accommodation and meals for officers, particularly those on the relief staffs, and arrangements to this end were promptly made, a minimum charge for the service being made.

SERVICES RENDERED TO DEPARTMENT.

The utmost assistance was given by the Public Works, Defence, and Railways Departments in readily making available supplies required for the various operations of the Department in the disturbed area, and by the last-mentioned Department in providing rapid transport. In many directions the officers of these Departments co-operated splendidly with the Department's officers in accelerating post and telegraph restoration work.

It is also desired to acknowledge the assistance rendered to the Department by many residents of the affected area and others in the delivery of telegrams and in a number of other ways in restoring and maintaining departmental facilities; also, the valuable services rendered by the organizations which provided food and in different ways attended to the well-being of officers in the earthquake area, and by those local residents who assisted in providing these services.

COMMERCIAL BRANCH.

The Commercial Branch, which was established in March, 1930, has during its first year of working not only helped considerably to maintain the financial position of the telephone branch, but also established between the Department and the telephone public a link in which the predominant feature is personal service. The total annual value of new business of all descriptions handled exceeded £30,000. The transactions numbered approximately five thousand.

As was indicated in the report for last year, the object of the branch, in so far as telephones are concerned, is to bring into profit telephone lines and equipment which are lying idle and which can be brought into use at small cost. In this connection the Commercial Branch has worked in the closest association with the officers of the Engineering Branch, as the co-operation of these two branches is essential to the extension of the telephone business on sound economic lines.

The institution, in March last year, of a system of monthly rentals has been helpful in enabling new telephone business to be secured. Spread over twelve payments in the year, settlement of the telephone rental becomes as easy as settlement of any other monthly account. There is little doubt that this arrangement has popularized the telephone and brought it within the reach of many who previously considered it to be beyond their means.

The Commercial Branch has been instrumental not only in securing new subscribers, but also in retaining a number of old subscribers who had notified their intention of relinquishing their telephones. Some people who are thus induced to continue do so, of course, for only a short period, but others, once having reversed their decision to relinquish, reinstate themselves as permanent subscribers.

The field staff of the Commercial Branch which, at the outset, comprised four Business Managers, one each at Auckland and Christchurch and two at Wellington, has now been increased at Auckland to one Business Manager and two Business Agents; at Wellington, to two Business Managers and one Business Agent; at Christchurch, to one Business Manager and one Business Agent; and at Dunedin, to one Business Manager: a total of nine officers. In addition, for the purpose of canvassing the residential areas of the smaller centres, the services were requisitioned of local officers who, over short periods, devoted the whole of their time to the making of an intensive canvass of the residential areas. In this way the residential areas of Napier, Wanganui, Palmerston North, Hawera, New Plymouth, Timaru, and Invercargill have been covered with a resultant increase in the number of telephone subscribers.

The operations of the Commercial Branch have been extended to the field of advertising in that the sale of space in telephone directories, which was formerly undertaken by an advertising contractor, has been taken over by the branch. The change coincided with an alteration in the layout of directories. In future all telephone directories will have two columns of names to the page instead of one, and each page will bear not more than one advertisement which will be accommodated in a one-inch space at the top of the page. This restriction on advertising space greatly improves the appearance of the directories, and enhances their value both as telephone directories and as advertising media. In this new field, the Commercial Branch has been singularly successful, practically the whole of the advertising-space available in directories of towns visited by Business Managers being sold.

The advertising contractor who formerly canvassed for directory advertisements has been given the right to compile and to print "Classified Business Directories," which will be bound and issued with the official telephone directories. The particular advantage of the business directory will be that it will present in handy form a list of bakers, butchers, grocers, plumbers, florists, &c., each trade grouped together, and will show, besides the names and addresses, the telephone numbers of the business people concerned. For inclusion in the business directory a small charge will be paid by the subscriber to the advertising contractor.

The publication in a telephone directory of a classified business directory is not new. The custom has long been in force in the older countries of the world.

At the time of taking over the work of obtaining advertisements for telephone directories, the Department took over also the work of obtaining orders for bold-type listings in the columns of names of subscribers. This also was formerly in the hands of an advertising contractor.

STORES BRANCH.

The following statement indicates the value of stores received and issued in the Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, and Wellington storekeeping districts during the year ended the 31st March, 1931, and the value of stocks held at that date. For the purpose of comparison the particulars for the previous year are shown also :—

	1930-31.			1929-30.		
	Receipts.*	Issues.*	Stock in hand, 31st March, 1931.	Receipts.*	Issues.*	Stock in hand, 31st March, 1930.
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Auckland ..	234,809	202,600	134,775	234,302	232,618	102,565
Christchurch ..	83,816	93,668	83,967	164,972	154,976	93,820
Dunedin ..	70,641	62,291	54,892	93,209	87,718	46,542
Wellington ..	368,370	391,485	281,093	388,217	360,417	304,208
Dominion totals	757,636	750,044	554,727	880,700	835,729	547,135

* Excluding transfers within storekeeping districts.

The total value of orders placed during the year was £348,772. Of this amount, £145,486 represented the cost of stores for supply from within the Dominion, while £203,286 represented the cost of stores for supply from overseas. The total value of orders placed during the previous year was £533,967.

The total value of stores purchased by the Department under contracts arranged by the Stores Control Board was £35,236, including £29,732 for motor-spirit and motor lubricating-oils.

An amount of £3,461 was spent in the purchase of insulator-cups manufactured in the Dominion, and £15,487 in the purchase locally of 19,259 silver-pine poles and 300 cedar poles. Rata and other New-Zealand-grown timber was obtained at a cost of £5,119 for cutting into telegraph-arms, &c. Orders for twine of New Zealand manufacture amounted to £3,575.

Particulars of purchases arranged by the Post and Telegraph Department on account of other Departments under the Stores Control Board Regulations are set out hereunder. The figures for the previous year are shown also :—

Year ended	Requisitions.	Items.	Value of Items purchased.		Total.
			On Indent.	Locally.	
			£	£	£
31st March, 1931 ..	3,196	13,376	23,560	43,060	66,620
31st March, 1930 ..	3,557	16,218	21,972	72,861	94,833

The purchase was arranged during the year of sixty motor-vehicles for other Departments, and of fifty-seven motor-vehicles for the Post and Telegraph Department. The figures for the previous year were 141 and 110 respectively.

SALE OF OBSOLETE AND UNSERVICEABLE MATERIAL.

A number of auction sales of obsolete and unserviceable material, including worn-out motor-vehicles from various Departments, was held during the year. The total value of property disposed of was £6,471. This sum includes the value of scrap lead, copper, and other metals sold by tender.

MARINE INSURANCE FUND.

The insurable value of stores from countries within the Empire and from the United States of America covered under the New Zealand Government Marine Insurance Fund was £263,204.

WORKSHOPS.

The Department's workshops throughout the Dominion continued to cope efficiently with the ever-growing requirements of the Service, and, in addition, the facilities were increasingly availed of by other Departments for the servicing and repairing of their motor-vehicles. While the activities of the shops were, in the main, similar to former years, the general curtailment of expenditure, together with the installation in some instances of more up-to-date plant, resulted in a slight reduction of staff.

At the four chief centres the workshops are equipped for undertaking all classes of maintenance work, in respect of both telegraph and telephone apparatus and motor-vehicles. Manufacturing-work to a limited extent is also carried out in the Wellington Workshops, and to a lesser extent at Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin. Being essentially maintenance shops, the manufacturing-work naturally forms only a very small portion of the work executed, but the amount of such work undertaken assists to keep fully occupied the staff and machinery which are necessary for maintenance purposes.

At the workshops situated at Hamilton, Napier, Wanganui, Palmerston North, Whangarei, Paeroa, Masterton, Gisborne, Greymouth, Timaru, and Invercargill the work is confined to repairs to motor-vehicles.

The total value of the work performed in the various workshops during the year amounted to £103,584, of which £7,627 represents the value of services rendered to other Government Departments.

BUILDINGS.

During the year buildings were erected as follow :—

Post-office buildings : Kurow, Mount Albert (Auckland), Napier, Te Anga.

Garages : Albany, Blenheim (also store, &c.), Ohura, Rawene, Tikitiki, Walton.

Residences for Postmasters : Hinds, Kurow.

The foundations for the new chief post-office building which it is proposed to erect at Dunedin have been completed.

A building was erected on Mount Crawford (Wellington) for the accommodation of the New Zealand receiving station of the trans-Tasman radio-telephone service.

Increased or improved accommodation for departmental purposes has been provided at the following places: Christchurch, Gore, Greymouth, Hokitika, Huntly (garage), Kaikohe, Kaitaia, Nelson, Newton (Auckland), Papatoetoe, Wairoa (garage), Wellington (workshops), Whangarei.

The following works were in progress at the end of the year: Courtenay Place (Wellington East), new post-office building; High Street (Christchurch), new post-office building; Lower Hutt, automatic telephone-exchange building; Masterton, addition and alterations; Palmerston (Otago), new post-office building; Ruatoria, new post-office building and residence for Postmaster; Upper Symonds Street (Auckland), new post-office building; Urenui, new post-office building; Waitara, new post-office building; Westport, new chief post-office building.

The erection of a new chief post-office building at Dunedin has been authorized, and tenders for the work are soon to be invited.

The erection of new buildings at the following places has also been authorized, but, owing to the financial position, action has been deferred meantime: Greymouth (garage and store), Petone, Thames, Thornbury.

The following buildings were disposed of: Awa, old post-office building; Ohakune Junction, lineman's cottage; Slope Point, old telephone-office building; Takahue, old post-office building; West Plains, old post-office building; Worser Bay (Wellington), old boat-shed.

On the 22nd April a fire which broke out in nearby premises threatened to destroy the Ahaura Post-office building. The danger was averted, however, by the voluntary services of a number of residents. As it was, the building suffered some damage.

On the 23rd April the post-office building at Collingwood was slightly damaged by a fire which caused extensive damage in the township. The building was saved from destruction through the combined efforts of the local fire brigade and two members of the post-office staff.

LAND.

Areas of land were acquired for departmental purposes as follow: Clydevale, new site for post-office building; Colville, site for post-office building; Grey Lynn, site in Surrey Crescent for post-office building; Hamilton, site for chief post-office building; Mahanga Bay (Wellington), site for storage of submarine cable, &c.; Milton, site for residence for Postmaster; Mount Crawford (Wellington), site for radio-receiving station; Ngawha, new site for post-office building; Ruatoria, new site for post-office building and residence for Postmaster; Te Anga, site for post-office building; Urenui, site for post-office building; Waterloo (Lower Hutt), site for post-office building; Wellington, site for line depot.

Areas of departmental land were disposed of as follow: Clydevale, old post-office site; Howick, portion of post-office site; Longford, old telegraph reserve; Naumai, old post-office site; Ngawha, old post-office site; Ohakune Junction, site of lineman's cottage; Ruatoria, old post-office site; Te Kopuru, old post-office site; Tokoroa, old post-office site; Waiuku, portion of old post-office site; Worser Bay (Wellington), site for storage of submarine cable, &c.

DEPARTMENTAL MOTOR-VEHICLES.

Owing to the reduction in the demand for transport, it has been possible to withdraw from commission and sell a number of worn-out vehicles without replacing them. Fifty-seven new vehicles were purchased during the year, and seventy-five old ones were sold.

At the 31st March, 1931, the departmental motor-vehicle fleet comprised 111 cars; 473 lorries, trucks, and vans; and 14 motor-cycles: a total of 598 vehicles, against 616 as at the 31st March, 1930.

The total mileage travelled by the fleet for the year was 4,479,391—22,648 in excess of the mileage for the previous year.

SUGGESTIONS BOARD.

The number of suggestions made by officers for improving the working of the Department was 426. The number of awards was fifteen, the total sum awarded being £34.

The Gray Memorial Prize for the best original suggestion for 1928 was awarded to Mr. R. L. R. Apperley, Senior Mechanician, Wellington, for a suggestion concerning a multiple toll-line dialling circuit. The 1929 prize was awarded to Mr. W. Gazley, Supervisor, Stores Division, General Post Office, for a suggestion that, when practicable, solo giant solid tires instead of twin solid tires be fitted to the rear wheels of departmental motor-lorries.

In each case the prize took the form of a gold medal.

POST OFFICE.

INCREASE IN POSTAGE RATES.

To obtain revenue for the Consolidated Fund for the year ending the 31st March, 1932, postage rates and charges were increased as under on the 1st March, 1931:—

Item.	Old Rate.	New Rate.
Letters and letter-cards for inland delivery	1d. for first ounce and $\frac{1}{2}$ d. for each additional ounce	2d. for first ounce and 1d. for each additional ounce.
Letters and letter-cards addressed to places within the Empire, United States, and certain other places	1d. for each ounce	2d. for first ounce and 1d. for each additional ounce.
Late fee	1d.	2d.
Post-cards (inland)	$\frac{1}{2}$ d.	1d.
Inland packets	$\frac{1}{2}$ d. for each 2 oz. or fraction thereof up to 2 lb., and 2d. for each additional pound up to 5 lb.	1d. for each 4 oz. or fraction thereof up to 1 lb., and 4d. for each additional pound up to 5 lb.
Registered magazines	Each copy 1d. for each 8 oz. or fraction thereof	Each copy 2d. for each 8 oz. or fraction thereof.
Newspapers— Inland	$\frac{1}{2}$ d. per copy	Each copy 1d. for each 8 oz. (From 23rd March, rate altered to 1d. for each 16 oz.)
Overseas to all places to which Postal Union rates do not apply	1d. per copy	Each copy 1d. for each 6 oz. (From 13th April, rate altered to 1d. for each 16 oz.)
Registration	3d.	4d.
Acknowledgment of receipt of registered article	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.	3d.
Parcels (inland)	Not exceeding 1 lb., 6d.; for each additional pound up to 10 lb., 2d.; and for each additional pound up to 28 lb., 1d.; maximum weight, 28 lb.; maximum size, 7 ft. in length and girth combined	Not exceeding 1 lb., 6d.; not exceeding 2 lb., 1s.; for each additional pound up to 11 lb., 3d.; maximum weight, 11 lb.; maximum size, 6 ft. in length and girth combined.
Parcels (inland) containing fishing-rods and golf-clubs exceeding 3 ft. 6 in. but not exceeding 4 ft. 6 in. in length	Not exceeding 3 lb., 1s. 6d.; for each additional pound or fraction thereof up to 11 lb., 3d.	Not exceeding 3 lb., 2s. 6d.; for each additional pound or fraction thereof up to 11 lb., 3d.
Fragile fee— For ordinary sized parcels	6d.	1s.
For light bulky parcels	9d.	1s. 6d.
Insurance of parcels (inland)	Minimum fee, 3d.	Minimum fee, 4d.
Undelivered printer matter returned to sender	$\frac{1}{2}$ d.	1d.
Customs clearance fee	3d.	6d.

INLAND MAIL SERVICES.

Except for the interruptions due to the earthquake in Hawke's Bay, particulars of which are furnished in the paragraph concerning the earthquake published on page 14 of this report, mail-services by road have been performed with regularity throughout the year.

The contracts for the various services performed under contract in the North Island expired on the 31st December, and new contracts were arranged for a further period of three years from the 1st January. The result of the reletting was most satisfactory, a saving in subsidies of approximately £4,500 per annum being effected, notwithstanding that a number of improvements were effected. For most services there was keen competition. There was a noticeable increase in the number of tenders received for "blocks" of services. There is a distinct tendency towards the centralization in the larger towns of the commencing-points of the services to outlying districts, the existence of many motor passenger services resulting in road mail-services being run from the larger centres.

Gisborne is now provided with a night mail-service by road to and from Napier, with the result that all mail-matter (except ordinary parcels) is available in Gisborne twenty-four hours after despatch from Wellington. Parcels that are not sent "express transit" reach Gisborne thirty-eight hours after leaving Wellington. Previously letters only were carried on the night service, and parcels and second-class matter on a next-day service. The cost of the new service is considerably less than the cost of the former separate services.

Another improvement was effected by arranging for mails to and from Kaitaia and Awanui and other places in the district to be conveyed via the Mangamuka Gorge. Formerly most of the Kaitaia and Awanui mails were conveyed via Kaeo and Mangonui.

Rawene and other places on or adjacent to the Hokianga River, previously served by launch from Horeke, are now served by road from Kaikohe.

The mail-service route for Dargaville has also been altered. Mails for and from that place are now transported by rail and road via Tangowahine (the present terminus of the new railway for Dargaville) at a considerable saving in cost, the former contract river mail-service between Helensville and Dargaville having been dispensed with.

The through services between Rotorua and Tauranga and between Rotorua and Te Puke have ceased, as Tauranga and Te Puke are now adequately served by rail.

In August the contract service between Wellington (or Lyttelton) and the Chatham Islands for the conveyance of passengers, freight, and mails (a service arranged by the Department of Agriculture) was terminated. Payment for the conveyance of mails for the Islands has since been made on a weight basis.

Following the opening of the new coastal road between Westport and Greymouth a service for the conveyance of mails was established on the 1st December which permits of a more expeditious exchange of mails between Westport on the one hand and Greymouth and Christchurch on the other.

An improved service, making better provision for the transport of passengers and mails, was arranged between Bluff and Half-moon Bay (Stewart Island) from the 1st January.

The reduction by the Railway Department of some of its services necessitated the establishment of road services in order to maintain reasonable mail communication for certain places formerly served by rail. Important in this connection is the twice-weekly road service established between Invercargill and Dunedin. This service operates when the frequency of the express train service between Christchurch and Invercargill is only thrice-weekly. This road service, which provides for letter mails and "express transit" parcels, is performed by departmental vehicle. Other places the reduced train services for which have been replaced or supplemented by road mail-services are Oxford, Wyndham, Waikaka, Waikaia, Whitecliffs, and Greytown.

The Nelson-Reefton-Westport road service which, as a result of the earthquake in June, 1929, was diverted via Maruia, reverted to the original route via Lyell on the 1st November, 1930.

The sea service arranged between Westport and Karamea as a result of the earthquake in that area was terminated on the 22nd January, 1931, on the restoration of the former thrice-weekly service by road.

DESTRUCTION OF POSTAL VAN BY FIRE.

On the 3rd March the postal van attached to the 2 p.m. express train from Wellington to Auckland was destroyed by fire. As the train was approaching Tangiwai, a small settlement situated some miles south of Ohakune, the Mail Agents observed smoke rising from the end of the van nearest the engine-tender adjoining. Immediate action was taken to remove the mail stacked in the affected space, but when this operation was completed there was an outburst of flames. The fire spread quickly, fanned by the draught due to the speed of the train, and it was with some difficulty that communication with the carriage immediately behind the van was obtained, a passage having first to be cleared through the bags at the rear of the van. When the door was reached the officers could not open it, and they had to break the glass panelling to draw the attention of passengers in the adjoining carriage, who immediately operated the emergency apparatus and brought the train to a standstill. By this time the van was full of smoke and the fire had a good hold. Prompt steps were taken to detach the vehicle from the rest of the train, but all efforts to check the flames were without avail. Little time was available in which to salvage mail, and, with the exception of nineteen bags and loose registered articles, the whole of the mail, which comprised 188 receptacles, was destroyed.

Except that one of the agents was singed, the departmental officers escaped scathless. They had a narrow escape, however, and under the conditions obtaining they did well to save a portion of the mails.

The circumstances under which the van caught fire were the subject of a Commission of Inquiry. The Board was unable to determine the origin of the fire.

CARRIAGE OF MAILS BY RAIL.

Payment by the Post Office to the Railway Department for the carriage of mails has for many years been made on the basis of the number of miles of main lines and branch lines open for traffic. Since 1928 the rate of payment under this arrangement has been £21 2s. 6d. per mile for main lines and £16 per mile for branch lines open for traffic. In addition, postal sorting cars were paid for at the rate of 1s. 4d. per mile, and wagons on express trains at the rate of 9d. per mile. On this basis the amount paid to the Railway Department for the year 1930 was £116,563.

The question of the payment for the carriage of mails by rail was investigated in 1930 by the Railways Commission; and the Commission recommended that the Post Office be charged on the following basis for mails carried by the Railway Department:—

Mails carried in guards' vans on any train	Half railway parcel rates.
Haulage of postal sorting-cars attached to express or mail trains	1s. 4d. per car-mile.
Haulage of bogie wagons conveying mail-matter on express trains	9d. per wagon-mile.
Haulage of four-wheeled wagons conveying mail-matter on mixed or goods trains	6d. per wagon-mile.

The recommendation was adopted by Government; and from the 1st April, 1931, payment is being made on the new basis. To form a basis for arriving at the amount due to the Railway Department for the carriage of mails in guards' vans, all mails carried will be weighed for a period of two weeks in each year.

ONEHUNGA—NEW PLYMOUTH MAIL-SERVICE.

The Onehunga—New Plymouth mail and passenger steamer service, which had been in operation for about fifty years, ceased on the 2nd April. Until the Main Trunk Railway was opened between Auckland and Wellington in 1908, this service was the principal means of communication between Auckland and the South. Of recent years the increased use of motor transport has affected the service to such an extent that the steamship company decided early in the year to replace the passenger steamer by an auxiliary schooner carrying cargo only. It is not now advantageous to use the service for mails.

The Onehunga—New Plymouth service is the third mail and passenger steamer-service to be abandoned in the Auckland Province during recent years. The Auckland—Whangarei sea service was abolished in September, 1926, and the Auckland—Tauranga sea service in March, 1929. The opening of through railway-lines was principally responsible for the withdrawal of the sea services.

OVERSEAS MAILS.

Except for the loss of the "Tahiti" on the 17th August, while on the voyage from Wellington to San Francisco, the ocean mail-services between Auckland and Vancouver and between Wellington and San Francisco have been performed regularly and without mishap. The Union Steamship Company, the mail contractors, were given authority to cancel the San Francisco—Wellington portion of the round trip that was to have been performed by the "Tahiti." For the following round trip the "Maunganui" replaced the "Tahiti," after which the "Monowai" (formerly the "Razmak" of the P. and O. Steamship Co.'s fleet) entered the service in permanent replacement of the "Tahiti" on the 2nd December from Wellington.

The average times of transmission of mails during the year by the contract services, which provide for regular fortnightly sailings, were as follow: Auckland to London (via Vancouver), 30-92 days; London to Auckland (via Vancouver), 30-38 days; Wellington to London (via San Francisco), 28-69 days; London to Wellington (via San Francisco), 31-5 days.

The contracts for the services expired on the 31st March, 1930, and were renewed for a further period of a year from the 1st April, 1930. The contracts are to be further renewed for twelve months from the 1st April, 1931.

The Panama route continues to be used for the despatch of specially addressed correspondence and of second-class mail matter and parcels for the United Kingdom and Europe. The advent of fast steamers on this route has led to the service becoming popular for specially addressed correspondence, and a considerable quantity of first-class matter is now despatched by the service. The United Kingdom Post Office uses this route almost wholly for the despatch of second-class mail-matter and parcels to New Zealand and to a considerable extent for letter mails.

The Suez route is used only for the despatch from New Zealand of specially addressed letters, but considerable use is still made of the route for forwarding correspondence to New Zealand.

The weekly Friday non-contract service maintained between Australia and New Zealand by steamers of the Union Steamship Co. and the Huddart Parker Co. was reduced for some months of the year. The service was, however, so rearranged that a steamer left either Auckland or Wellington every Friday for Sydney. Previously on every alternate Friday steamers left both Auckland and Wellington for Sydney. In addition to the regular weekly service, mails for Australia are despatched fortnightly on Tuesdays by the steamers engaged in the Vancouver and San Francisco services, and, when a good despatch is afforded, by cargo steamers engaged in the Melbourne, Sydney, and Newcastle—New Zealand services.

The Bluff—Melbourne mail service contract was not renewed or relet when it expired on the 28th January.

LOSS OF MAIL-STEAMER "TAHITI."

The mail-steamer "Tahiti" was lost at sea on the 17th August (New Zealand time) some 400 miles south of Rarotonga on the outward voyage from Wellington to San Francisco. The sinking of the vessel was occasioned by a mishap to the starboard propeller shaft which occurred at 4.30 a.m. on the 15th August, when the ship was four days out from New Zealand. Water rapidly found its way into the after-holds and engine-room of the ship, and for some hours the position of the vessel was precarious. Although in a helpless condition, she remained afloat sufficiently long, however, to permit of the saving of the passengers and crew, and the great bulk of the first-class mail-matter.

Following the mishap steps were at once taken to have the letter mails brought to the deck. In this work the Mail Agent (Mr. J. C. Greig) and his assistant (Mr. S. Hanna) had every assistance from the crew. At a later stage the Mail Agents were able, with the help of passengers, to bring second-class mails also to the deck. At this time the crew were busily engaged in manning the pumps, and it was necessary for the Agent and his assistant to work in the hold at some risk to themselves in the event of the vessel foundering.

On the 16th August, the small Norwegian vessel "Penybryn" reached the scene, and stood by until on the following morning the s.s. "Ventura," a large American passenger vessel, arrived. The passengers and crew were transferred to the "Ventura." The boats of the "Tahiti," with the assistance of a boat from the "Penybryn," then engaged in the task of transferring the letter mails from the disabled steamer to the "Ventura." This was a most hazardous undertaking, as the mail-bags had to be dropped from the deck of the "Tahiti" to the boats rolling in the swell below. Some of the bags fell into the sea, but most of these were recovered. Of a total of 257 letter-bags on the ship only

nine were lost. The second-class matter which was lost comprised 330 bags, of which forty-one were parcel receptacles. One bag of parcels was saved.

The "Ventura" was bound for San Francisco, and the salvaged mails were sent on by her, arriving in London on due date. The Mail Agents returned to New Zealand by the "Tofua" after transferring at Pago Pago.

For the sixty hours which elapsed from the time of the mishap to the "Tabiti" to the transfer of the passengers and letter mails to the "Ventura" the Mail Agents, in common with the ship's complement, were without sleep; and the strain on them was considerable. From the outset they assisted in the emergency work that was continuously necessary to keep the ship afloat until succour arrived.

The devotion to duty under very trying conditions of the Mail Agents was in accordance with the highest ideals of the Service. The assistance rendered them by the master, ship's officers, and crew is also worthy of special comment. The Mail Agents' efforts would have been of little avail without the substantial assistance of members of the ship's complement. This will be appreciated all the more when it is mentioned that the letter mails comprised 27 tons, ship's measurement, and that they and the second-class matter required to be brought to the deck by manual labour.

AIR MAILS.

Towards the end of 1930 Government invited tenders for the conveyance of mails by air once daily each way between Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin. It was proposed to make a surcharge of 3d. an ounce for all mail carried, and one of the conditions was that, subject to a 7½-per-cent. deduction to cover Post Office expenses, the successful tenderer should accept payment at the rate mentioned for conveying mails. None of the tenders received complied with the conditions, and the proposal to establish the service was accordingly abandoned. The service would no doubt have been of some benefit to the business community; but it was not expected that it would be availed of regularly to any appreciable extent, in view of the quick and regular night mail-services already operating between Auckland and Wellington and Wellington and Christchurch.

From the 1st July, 1930, the date on which the Air Mail Convention of London came into force, arrangements were made for the acceptance of letters for transmission by the Karachi-London air service and by air mail-services traversing Australia, Canada, and the United States of America. The time saved by the use of the Karachi-London service in the transmission of correspondence posted in New Zealand between the fortnightly sailings of the San Francisco and Vancouver contract mail-steamers is from one to ten days according to steamer connections made in Australia, and also according to whether the winter or summer time-table is operating between Karachi and London. The use of Canadian and United States air services results in a saving of from one to two days, while in the case of Australia a saving of up to seven days, according to destination, may result from the use of air mail-services.

For the period 1st July, 1930, to 31st March, 1931, the number of letters posted in New Zealand to connect with overseas air mail-services was 8,043. By far the greater number of these letters was forwarded by the Karachi-London service.

POSTAGE-STAMPS.

The postage-stamps issued during the year comprised the "Charity" stamp (the report in connection with which appears on the following page) and a 2d. "Official" stamp. The latter was reintroduced during March, following the increase of the minimum letter-postage to 2d.

Proposed Issue of Series of Pictorial Stamps.—Competitive designs have been invited for a new issue of postage and revenue stamps for the Dominion. The designs are to be representative of characteristic or notable New Zealand scenery or genre, or industrial, agricultural, or pastoral scenes; and the values will be in approximately fifteen denominations ranging from ½d. to 3s. The closing-date for the receipt of designs is the 30th September, 1931. A special Board, on which there will be representatives of art as well as of the Government Departments concerned, will be set up to adjudicate on the merits of the designs submitted, and a prize of £25 will be paid for each design that is adopted for a stamp of the new series.

Air-mail Stamps.—The issue of a series of air-mail stamps comprising the denominations 3d., 4d., and 7d. has also been approved. The plates for the stamps are being manufactured in England.

POSTAL STATIONERY.

The cost to the Department of the post-card and letter-card paper and printing was about £1,700 a year. As it was considered that there was no sound reason why the cost of the articles should be borne by the Department, it was decided to make an addition to the selling-price, hitherto the postage value, to cover the cost of production. Accordingly, from the 2nd February, 1931, the following charges were introduced:—

1d. letter-cards, 2d. for 10 (in addition to postage value).

½d. post-cards, ½d. for 8, or 6d. for 100 (in addition to postage value).

The selling-prices of other articles of postal stationery already included an amount to cover the cost of production.

The increased postage rates which were brought into operation on the 1st March necessitated the reintroduction of letter-cards bearing postage 2d. and the introduction of inland post-cards and postal wrappers bearing postage 1d. ("King George V." die). These were placed on sale during March at the following prices in addition to postage: Letter-cards, 2d. for 11; inland post-cards, $\frac{1}{2}$ d. for 8; postal wrappers, 2d. for 22.

In view of the negligible demand for "reply-paid" post-cards, such cards were withdrawn from sale in March. Existing stocks were converted into single cards.

For the same reason, further supplies of large registered-letter envelopes will not be obtained.

"CHARITY" STAMP.

It is regretted that the hopes entertained for a greater response this year to the "Charity" stamp appeal were not realized, the gross value of the sales being £1,730, compared with approximately £5,000 the previous year. The decreased response was no doubt due to the financial depression through which the Dominion is passing, and to a lesser extent to the design of the stamp being practically a replica of that of the previous year. A new design had been ordered from England, but unexpected difficulty experienced in engraving prevented the stamp reaching New Zealand in time for the launching of the campaign. The stamps were placed on sale on the 29th October, 1930, and withdrawn on the 28th February, 1931.

The object of the appeal is the establishment of permanent bases throughout New Zealand for health camps for improving the health of ill-nourished and debilitated children, and of children who are contacts of tuberculosis in their own homes.

DISCONTINUANCE OF PAYMENT OF COMMISSION TO LICENSED STAMP-VENDORS.

As an economy measure the payment of commission to persons licensed under the Stamp Duties Act to sell stamps ceased on the 31st January, 1931. The saving is estimated at £3,000 per annum. A large number of vendors continue to sell stamps without commission.

NEW POSTAL CONVENTION.

The Postal Union Convention, which was signed at London on the 28th June, 1929, came into force on the 1st July, 1930.

PARCEL-POST SERVICE WITH CANADA.

At the request of the Canadian Administration, the weight limit for parcels posted in Canada for delivery in New Zealand was increased in June from 15 lb. to 20 lb.

DECENTRALIZATION OF POSTMEN AT WELLINGTON.

The scheme of decentralization of postmen in Wellington has proved successful in operation, and the arrangement has been made a permanent one. A substantial saving in expenditure has resulted, without impairing the efficiency of the service.

EMPLOYMENT OF PARTIALLY-DISABLED RETURNED SOLDIERS AS PART-TIME POSTMEN.

Early in the year four partially-disabled returned soldiers were employed in Auckland to assist the postmen on the busier walks in the inner business area. In respect of the first delivery, this has resulted in a gain in delivery time of correspondence of from half an hour to an hour.

"HOUSEHOLDER" CIRCULAR SCHEME.

The revenue from "Householder" circulars posted during the year was £12,941, and the number of the circulars dealt with was 6,836,964. The scheme is becoming increasingly popular with the business community.

INSPECTION.

During the year 1,802 visits of inspection to post-offices were paid by Inspectors.

A large deficiency was found in the official cash at one office. The Postmistress admitted that she had misappropriated the amount, and was dealt with according to law.

BURGLARY OF POST-OFFICE PREMISES.

There were several burglaries of post-office premises during the year. Most of the offices entered were situated in stores or other buildings which are not the property of the Department; and in only one case was a large sum of money the property of the Department stolen. This was at the Karioi Post-office. The safe, containing approximately £96 in negotiable values, was removed from the building, and although very full inquiries were made by the police the offenders were not traced or the safe recovered.

ARTICLES DELIVERED.

During the year 1930 the estimated number of articles delivered in the Dominion, including those received from places overseas, compared with the number in 1929, was as under :—

		1930.	1929.	Increase Per Cent.	Decrease Per Cent.
Letters	.. ..	160,995,793	159,977,587	0.64	..
Post-cards	.. ..	5,242,939	5,244,459	..	0.03
Parcels	.. ..	3,317,841	3,601,476	..	7.87
All other articles	.. ..	108,526,092	105,759,874	2.61	..
Totals	.. ..	278,082,665	274,583,396		

AVERAGE NUMBER OF LETTERS POSTED PER UNIT OF POPULATION.

1930, 101.9.

NUMBER OF POST-OFFICES IN DOMINION.

Small country post-offices continue to be replaced by rural deliveries. Offices opened during the year numbered 13, while offices closed numbered 60. The number of offices remaining open on the 31st March, 1930, was 1,812.

DEAD LETTER OFFICE.

	1930.	1929.
Letters returned to senders in New Zealand	.. .. 650,546*	622,050
Other articles returned to senders in New Zealand	.. .. 257,238	270,795
Letters returned to other Administrations	.. .. 101,480†	90,205
Other articles returned to other Administrations	.. .. 127,156	120,160
Letters destroyed (senders unknown and contents of no value)	.. .. 36,413	31,506
Letters and letter-cards posted without addresses	.. .. 12,148	12,048
Letters imperfectly or insufficiently addressed	.. .. 20,967	23,122
Letters intercepted addressed to persons and firms on prohibited list	.. .. 1,681	3,210
Letters intercepted on account of libellous addresses	.. .. 112	82
Newspapers received without addresses	.. .. 4,183	5,752
Other articles received without addresses	.. .. 3,970	4,629
Newspapers returned to publishers as undeliverable	.. .. 46,346	44,854
Articles bearing previously used stamps	.. .. 156	80

The proportion of undeliverable letters to the total number of letters delivered was 0.49 per cent. In 1929 the proportion was 0.46 per cent.

MISSING POSTAL PACKETS.

During 1930 the number of inquiries for missing postal packets received by the Department was 6,601. In 3,608 cases, or 54.6 per cent. of the total number, the packets were traced or otherwise accounted for satisfactorily. The position regarding delay in delivery is as follows :—

Sender responsible for delay	.. ..	1,010
Addressee responsible for delay	.. ..	1,129
Post Office responsible for delay	.. ..	382
No delay, or responsibility not fixed	.. ..	1,087

In 2,993 cases the disposal of the packets could not be determined. These cases represent 0.00123 per cent. of the total number of articles posted.

CUSTOMS PARCELS.

The following table shows the declared value of goods received by parcel-post from places abroad and the Customs duty thereon : also the declared value of goods despatched by parcel-post to places abroad. The figures for the years 1930 and 1929 are shown in each case :—

	1930.			1929.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Declared value of received parcels	..	1,301,121	0 0	1,648,250	0 0	
Customs duty	332,793	17 11	372,143	10 8	
Declared value of forwarded parcels	..	78,031	0 0	115,580	0 0	

* Including 34,265 registered.

† Including 923 registered.

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.

The increases are as set out below :—

	Old Rate.	New Rate.
Telegrams (ordinary)	9d. for 12 words, and 1d. for each additional word	1s. for 12 words, and 1d. for each additional word.
Telegrams (urgent)	1s. 6d. for 12 words, and 2d. for each additional word	2s. for 12 words, and 2d. for each additional word.
Letter-telegrams (inland)	9d. for 27 words, and 1d. for each additional 3 words	1s. for 24 words, and 1d. for each additional 2 words.
Greetings telegrams : (Inland)—Christmas and New Year	6d. for 11 words, and $\frac{1}{2}$ d. for each additional word (text transmitted free)	9d. for 12 words, and 1d. for each additional word (text transmitted free).
* Radio-telegrams originating in, or destined for New Zealand—		
(a) Exchanged between the New Zealand coast stations and ships <i>not</i> registered in Australia or New Zealand, and <i>not</i> trading exclusively between the two countries	10d. per word	11d. per word.
(b) Exchanged between the New Zealand coast stations and ships registered in Australia or New Zealand, or trading exclusively between the two countries or on the New Zealand coast	5d. per word	6d. per word.

* Amended rates took effect from 1st April, 1931.

Press telegrams : The rates for press telegrams were unaltered, but where previously all press messages lodged after 5 p.m. were charged for separately at the press rate the number of words now permitted to be charged at this rate is limited as follows :—

Morning newspapers may receive 6,000 words of inland press news charged at the press rate, each word in excess being charged $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per word. Evening newspapers may receive 1,000 words of inland press news charged at the press rate, each word in excess being charged at $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per word.

During sessions of Parliament the limits imposed after 5 p.m. are extended to 8,000 words in the case of morning newspapers and 3,000 words in the case of evening newspapers.

REDUCTION OF CABLE RATES TO GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

Since the sale of the Pacific Cable undertaking by the partner Governments of Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand to Imperial and International Communications, Ltd., New Zealand has been represented upon the Imperial Communications Advisory Committee, and every effort has been made by our representative to secure the most favourable rates for cable service between New Zealand and the United Kingdom. It is gratifying to record that from the 1st January, 1931, cable rates from New Zealand to Great Britain and Ireland were reduced as follow :—

	Old Rate.	Reduced Rate.
Full rate	1s. 11d. per word	1s. 8d. per word.
Deferred	11 $\frac{1}{2}$ per word	10d. per word.
British Government	1s. per word	10d. per word.
Daily letter	8d. per word (minimum charge, 13s. 4d.)	6d. per word (minimum charge, 10s.).
Week-end	7d. per word (minimum charge, 11s. 8d.)	5d. per word (minimum charge, 8s. 4d.).
Press	6d. per word	4d. per word.
Deferred press (via Pacific only)	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per word	3d. per word.

MACHINE PRINTING TELEGRAPHS.

The teleprinter and multiplex printing telegraph apparatus in the Dominion continues to furnish a reliable service.

The flexibility of the multiplex system and its suitability for the rapid handling of heavy traffic were particularly in evidence during the period immediately following the earthquake in Hawke's

Bay on the 3rd February. The multiplex sets at Napier were completely destroyed by fire, and a relief set was installed in a temporary telegraph office giving a direct multiplex circuit to Wellington. Two of the four channels were automatically repeated at Wellington into a Wellington-Auckland circuit, thus permitting the simultaneous transmission to both Wellington and Auckland of eighty words a minute in each direction.

SUPPLY OF CURRENT FOR TELEGRAPH PURPOSES.

The policy of introducing the universal-battery telegraph system into the larger telegraph offices, and thereby effecting improved operation and substantial economies in maintenance, has been furthered during the year by the installation of the system at Napier and at Nelson.

Investigation has been made with promising results into the practicability of using rectifiers instead of batteries for supplying current for telegraph operation. Two rectifying units constructed to the Department's specification were purchased, and extended trials have indicated a very satisfactory and economical performance. The temporary office at Napier is now being wholly supplied by current from rectifiers with entirely satisfactory results.

TRANS-TASMAN FLIGHT OF AEROPLANE "SOUTHERN CROSS JUNIOR."

At 3 a.m., New Zealand time, on the 7th January, 1931, Mr. Guy Menzies, of Sydney, left Sydney as the sole occupant of the aeroplane "Southern Cross Junior" on a flight from Australia to New Zealand. The enterprise was undertaken without previous notification; and, upon the receipt of late advice from Australia, offices on the West Coast were instructed to keep a lookout for the aeroplane. At 3.20 p.m. on the same day the Chief Postmaster at Greymouth advised that the aeroplane had landed in a swamp at Herepo, near Ross, the report of the landing coming in the first place from the Postmistress at Harihari. This is the first occasion upon which a solo flight from Australia to New Zealand has been undertaken, and the safe arrival of the aeroplane was a matter of great interest and gratification on both sides of the Tasman.

CHESS MATCHES BY TELEGRAPH: CHARGE FOR HIRE OF CIRCUIT.

From the 1st December, 1930, the Department has made a charge for the hire of telegraph circuits for the purpose of conducting chess matches by telegraph. This charge is assessed at the rate of 1d. per mile of telegraph circuit utilized on each occasion, with a minimum charge of 15s. for each occasion. The length of circuit involved is based on the toll-line distance between the respective offices.

CARRIER-CURRENT TELEPHONE SYSTEMS.

The long-distance telephone network was considerably improved and extended during the year by the installation of the following additional carrier-current systems:—

Auckland-Whangarei	One single-channel system.
Auckland-Tauranga .. .. .	.. .. .
Auckland-Napier .. .. .	.. .. .
Napier-Gisborne	Two single-channel systems.
Napier - Palmerston North	One additional single-channel system.
New Plymouth - Wanganui	One single-channel system.
Wellington-Napier .. .. .	.. .. .
Wellington - Palmerston North	One additional single-channel system.
Wellington - New Plymouth	One single-channel system.
Wellington-Blenheim .. .. .	.. .. .
Nelson-Blenheim .. .. .	.. .. .
Seddon-Christchurch	One additional single-channel system.
Christchurch-Greymouth	One single-channel system.
Dunedin-Invercargill .. .. .	.. .. .

The Auckland-Whangarei carrier system has been installed for the purpose of increasing the efficiency of the toll services between Auckland and stations situated north of Whangarei and Dargaville. The arrangement is a temporary expedient until arrangements can be completed for the extension of the system north of Whangarei.

The Auckland-Tauranga circuit improves the efficiency of the telephone trunk-line between those two places, and, in addition, results in a more efficient long-distance service to other stations in the Bay of Plenty—*e.g.*, Opotiki and Whakatane. Incidentally, the superimposing of this system has rendered the original circuit available for providing one additional outlet between Auckland and Paeroa and one between Paeroa and Tauranga.

Until quite recently the Gisborne district has been more or less isolated telephonically from the principal cities of the Dominion. Conversation between those centres and Gisborne has in the past been possible only with great difficulty. The opening of the Wellington-Napier carrier system was the first important step in the direction of improving the toll service to the East Coast district. This was followed by the establishment of two carrier systems between Napier and Gisborne and one direct carrier circuit between Auckland and Napier. These additional facilities have effected a great improvement in the service in so far as it affects Napier, Gisborne, and other towns on the East Coast between Napier and the East Cape.

The carrier systems which have been established between Wellington and New Plymouth and between Wanganui and New Plymouth have effected a marked improvement in the quality of the service so far as the Taranaki District is concerned, particularly in regard to communication with districts south and east of New Plymouth. In the past all calls from New Plymouth to stations south of Hawera had to be switched through Hawera. The provision of the new direct outlets to Wanganui and Wellington respectively will therefore result in a great improvement in the speed of the service as well as in the quality and volume of transmitted speech.

It became evident soon after the Cook Strait four-core continuously-loaded telephone cable was brought into commission in 1926 that it would be necessary to provide additional circuits to carry the steadily increasing volume of inter-island traffic. The original allocation of cable circuits provided for one direct outlet between Wellington and Christchurch, but for some time past it has been necessary to afford relief by utilizing a circuit which involved intermediate switching at Blenheim. The matter of providing a second direct trunk circuit between Wellington and Christchurch without incurring further heavy expenditure in the laying of a second submarine telephone cable presented technical difficulties of some magnitude, as the only other cables across Cook Strait are of the single-core type, a type not designed for telephone purposes. After extensive investigations and tests, it was found that several of these single-core cables would lend themselves to the application of carrier-current methods, and that it would be practicable to establish one high-grade telephone circuit over each and still retain certain existing telegraph facilities. As a result, an additional telephone circuit has been provided between Wellington and Blenheim which is a modification of the standard single-channel system used in the Dominion. It utilizes carrier frequencies for the transmission of speech in one direction while voice frequencies are used for transmission in the other. The modified system is operating over No. 5 Cook Strait single-core unloaded telegraph cable which terminates at Lyall Bay (Wellington) and White Bay (Marlborough) respectively, the circuit from the latter point being continued by means of open aerial line to Blenheim. It is interesting to note that this cable is telephonically equivalent to 900 miles of open aerial trunk-line of the type used for long toll circuits throughout the Dominion—viz., lines built up of conductors of No. 12 copper wire. By the use of amplifying and equalizing equipment at Wellington and Blenheim the circuit has been made equal in efficiency to toll lines of fifty miles in length. The design of a circuit by the means indicated enabled an additional outlet to be provided for inter-island telephone traffic at a comparatively small cost. By utilizing this outlet for the Wellington-Blenheim traffic the four-wire single-channel carrier system operating over the four-core continuously-loaded submarine cable between Wellington and Seddon became available for use in building up a second direct trunk circuit between Wellington and Christchurch. This circuit was completed by the installation of an additional single-channel carrier system between Seddon and Christchurch, the two systems being permanently linked together on the four-wire principle at Seddon.

The efficiency and reliability of long-distance communications to and from Dunedin, Invercargill, and the West Coast of the South Island have been considerably increased by the installation of the Christchurch-Greymouth and Dunedin-Invercargill carrier systems and by the installation of voice-frequency repeaters at Timaru and Christchurch respectively. The voice-frequency repeaters at Timaru are used to amplify the speech in the two Christchurch-Dunedin trunk circuits while the single voice-frequency repeater at Christchurch is associated with the Christchurch-Greymouth physical circuit, so that it will approximate in efficiency to the high-grade carrier circuit which has been superimposed over it. The provision of one additional circuit between Christchurch and Greymouth, one between Christchurch and Dunedin, and one between Dunedin and Invercargill has effected a further improvement by speeding up the service in these districts.

The terminal apparatus associated with six carrier telephone systems was completely destroyed by fire at Napier as a result of the recent earthquake. There was not sufficient equipment available in the Dominion to enable the Department to restore all of the circuits affected, and some re-adjustment of facilities had to be made so that the necessary equipment could be provided to meet immediate requirements in respect of the toll circuits terminating at Napier. This was arranged by closing down indefinitely one of the single-channel carrier systems between Napier and Gisborne and one between Napier and Palmerston North. The Gisborne and Palmerston North terminals of these two systems were transferred to Napier, and by supplementing these with other equipment from Wellington it was found practicable to restore all toll services, with the exception of the two carrier channels referred to above.

EXTENSION OF TOLL AND TELEGRAPH FACILITIES.

A progressive improvement of toll and telegraph systems has been aimed at throughout the year. Where necessary, reconstruction work has been carried out for the purpose of improving the stability of pole lines and increasing their carrying-capacity. Rearrangement of circuits has also been effected with a view to increasing their earning-power and decreasing the cost of maintenance. In these

cases in which existing facilities could not be sufficiently augmented or improved by such methods new circuits were erected. The following is a list of places between which the efficiency of existing circuits was increased or where new circuits were provided :—

Whangarei—Towai.	Otorohanga—Honikiwi.
Whangarei—Waiwera (main East Coast line).	Whatawhata—Te Pahu.
Whangarei—Maungakaramea—Waiotira.	Awakino—Urenui.
Auckland—Waiuku.	Awakino—Mahoenui.
Auckland—Patumahoe.	Wanganui—Pipiriki.
Auckland—Pukekohe.	Patea—Wanganui.
Auckland—Hamilton.	Patea—Hawera.
Pukekohe—Tuakau.	Wairoa—Nuhaka.
Pukekohe—Patumahoe—Waiuku.	Napier—Hastings.
Paeroa—Morrinsville.	Levin—Palmerston North.
Katikati—Waihi.	Levin—Wellington.
Ngatea—Waitakaruru.	Marlborough Sounds toll line rearrangements.
Rotorua—Ngongotaha.	Rangiora—Amberley.
Tauranga—Matamata (new toll link between the	Christchurch—Greymouth—Westport.
Waikato and Bay of Plenty districts).	Christchurch—Culverden—Hammer Springs.
Whakatane—Te Teko via Edgecumbe.	Christchurch—Rakaia—Methven.
Taupiri—Orini.	Dunedin—Brighton.
Te Kuiti—Te Anga.	Dunedin—Cromwell.
Te Kuiti—Mahoenui.	Invercargill—Winton.
Waimiha—Mapiu—Mokauiti.	Invercargill—Riverton.

In addition to the foregoing, 279 miles of toll and telegraph pole-line were reconstructed during the year. This work also involved the replacement of 1,800 miles of wire.

The maintenance of the telegraph and toll systems throughout the Dominion was carried out satisfactorily during the year. With the exception of the disruption of lines in the Hawke's Bay area as a result of the earthquake, no interruption to service of any magnitude or over an extended period was experienced. From the Department's point of view this fully justifies the practice of carrying out regular and systematic overhauls, and the usage of only those classes of pole structures which have been proved equal to service conditions.

In connection with the construction and maintenance of lines of communication, the Department has always to keep in mind the important fact that telegraph and telephone facilities are most needed in times of emergency, when it not infrequently happens that its communication system is called upon to stand the most severe demands.

POLES AND WIRE.

During the year 154 miles of pole-line and 959 miles of wire were erected for telegraph and telephone (toll) purposes, while 204 miles of pole-line and 477 miles of wire were dismantled, or, in localities where no longer required by the Department, sold to settlers for use as private telephone-lines.

The lengths of pole-line and wire in use for telegraph and telephone toll purposes on the 31st March, 1930 and 1931, respectively, were as follows :—

Pole-line and Wire.	Year ended	
	31st March, 1930.	31st March, 1931.
Miles of pole-line	12,638*	12,588
Miles of wire	63,175*	63,657

* Revised figures.

The telegraph and telephone wire in use on the 31st March, 1931—viz., 63,657 miles—is classified as under :—

	Miles.
Used exclusively for telephone toll traffic	4,733
Used exclusively for telegraph traffic	9,271
Used simultaneously and (or) conjointly for telegraph and telephone toll traffic	49,653

The total length of wire that may be used for telephone toll traffic is 54,385 miles; the total length that may be used for the transmission of telegrams, 58,923 miles; and the length of telephone toll-lines over which telegrams may be transmitted by telephone, 23,494 miles. The total length of Morse circuit derived from the superimposing of telephone circuits is 14,107 miles, and the total length of additional telephone toll circuit improvised from the existing wire circuits by the use of subsidiary apparatus associated therewith (so-called phantom working) is 7,326 miles. In addition, 3,715 channel miles of telephone toll circuit have been obtained from the application of the carrier-current telephone system to telephone trunk lines.

NEW ZEALAND SUBMARINE CABLES.

COOK STRAIT CABLES.

With the exception of the two broken single-core telegraph cables between Oteronga Bay and White Bay to which reference was made in last year's report, the Cook Strait telephone and telegraph cables have remained in good working-condition during the year. The cable-repair steamer "Iris" has been commissioned to repair the Department's interrupted submarine cables in Cook Strait and will undertake this work shortly. The vessel is expected to arrive in Wellington from Melbourne early in April.

A high-grade telephone circuit between Wellington and Blenheim has been established over No. 5 Lyall Bay - White Bay single-core unloaded submarine-telegraph cable, and has been in operation since October. This cable is 44.65 nautical miles long, and is now utilized for the simultaneous transmission of both telephone and telegraph traffic, a quadruplex system operated as a duplex or triplex being used for the despatch of the telegraph traffic. Further particulars of the telephone system are given under the heading "Carrier current telephone systems."

As originally designed and equipped the Wellington-Seddon four-core continuously-loaded submarine cable provided for three telephone channels and four simplex hand-speed-operated telegraph channels. With the modifications recently adopted by the Department it is now practicable to operate a duplex system over each of three telegraph channels while the fourth channel is reserved for the operation of a multiplex dialling system by means of which the toll operators at Wellington and Blenheim dial direct the wanted subscribers at the distant terminal exchanges. In addition to these increased telegraph facilities, an extra telephone channel was established over this cable by the application of carrier-current methods as mentioned in last year's report.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A break in the Bluff - Stewart Island cable occurred in October, localization tests disclosing that the fault was close to the Ocean Beach (Bluff) cable hut. Repairs, which involved the laying of approximately 0.37 nautical miles of second-hand shore-end cable, were effected in November.

Approximately three miles and three-quarters of 4-pair and four miles of 8-pair submarine telephone cable were laid in the Marlborough Sounds during the year in order to provide improved telephone facilities for settlers in that locality.

For the purpose of providing facilities for connecting prospective subscribers in the Birkenhead and Northcote areas direct to the Auckland telephone exchange two 150-pair telephone cables were laid across Auckland Harbour in May. The total length of cable laid was approximately three and a half nautical miles.

RADIO-TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE SERVICES.

OPENING OF OVERSEAS RADIO-TELEPHONE SERVICE.

Last year in this report reference was made to the proposed institution of a radio-telephone service between New Zealand and Australia. The service was opened on 25th November, 1930, by a conversation between the Acting Prime Minister of Australia (the Hon. J. E. Fenton) and the Acting Prime Minister of New Zealand (the Hon. E. A. Ransom). The New Zealand terminal consists of a modulating unit working in conjunction with a 3-kW. short-wave continuous-wave transmitter at Wellington Radio. Directional arrays are employed both for transmission and reception. The receiving station is situated on Mount Crawford, approximately five miles from the transmitting station, and the terminal or linking equipment at the Stout Street toll centre. Communication via the overseas radio-telephone service is available from almost any centre in New Zealand to the exchanges in the eastern States of Australia. The charge for a connection between any available points in the two countries is £1 per minute with a minimum charge of £3. Tests are at present being conducted with a view to extending the service to London and other countries telephonically connected therewith; and it is anticipated that the extended service will be open to the public in the near future.

LOSS OF R.M.S. "TAHITI": ASSISTANCE RENDERED BY RADIO STATIONS.

A striking demonstration of the value of radio to ships at sea was given on the 15th August when between 3 and 4 a.m. (New Zealand time) the R.M.S. "Tahiti," bound from Wellington to San Francisco, was in urgent need of assistance. There was no response from other ships to messages broadcast by the vessel indicating the seriousness of her position, but Auckland Radio, per medium of Sydney Radio, got into touch with the s.s. "Ventura," then 500 miles from Suva, advising that vessel of the disaster, and then informing the "Tahiti" of the "Ventura's" position. In addition, a cable message was sent to Suva requesting the opening of the Suva Radio station, which was in a favourable position for directing the "Ventura." At 6 a.m. Suva Radio established communication with the "Ventura," and at 9 a.m., by arrangement, directed the latter vessel to proceed to the assistance of the "Tahiti." The s.s. "Tofua" and s.s. "Antinous" also left Suva and Rarotonga respectively to assist, but were later recalled. In the meantime Auckland Radio had been endeavouring, unsuccessfully, to raise the small steamer "Penybryn," which was bound from Papeete to

Auckland and was believed to be nearer to the "Tahiti" than was the "Ventura." At 4.35 p.m. the "Tahiti" also called the "Penybryn" and asked for assistance, but the message was apparently not received. From then on New Zealand and Pacific Island stations endeavoured to raise the "Penybryn," and at 6.33 p.m. Chatham Islands Radio heard the vessel asking, "Who is calling me?" At 6.42 p.m. the Chatham Islands station succeeded in passing to the "Penybryn" the Tahiti's request for the smaller vessel to stand by to take off the passengers if necessary. Rarotonga Radio then established communication with the "Penybryn," which was worked successfully until she reached the "Tahiti." Ultimately the "Ventura" arrived and took on board the passengers and crew of the "Tahiti." All the New Zealand and Pacific Islands radio stations remained open continuously throughout the period of anxiety and closely co-operated in rendering every assistance possible.

EMERGENCY RADIO INSTALLATIONS.

To ensure the maximum reliability of the New Zealand communications system and to provide a means of meeting any unforeseen interruptions that may arise, a number of self-contained short-wave radio-transmitting sets are being installed at strategic centres throughout the Dominion.

DIRECT SHORT-WAVE RADIO SERVICE WITH RAROTONGA RADIO: REDUCTION IN RATES.

Consequent upon the inauguration of a direct short-wave radio service between New Zealand and Rarotonga, commencing on the 12th May, 1930, the following reductions have been made in the rates on messages to the Cook Islands:—

Ordinary messages to Rarotonga: reduced from 1s. 6d. to 1s. per word.

Press messages: reduced from 4½d. to 3d. per word, with a minimum of 5s. for each press message.

Messages for Aitutaki, Atiu, Mangaia, and Mauke: reduced from 1s. 9d. to 1s. 3d. per word. The reductions do not apply to messages to Niue.

NEW ZEALAND RADIO STATIONS.

At Wellington Radio a 165 ft. steel-lattice mast has been erected. The higher mast and aerials have considerably improved the range of the medium-wave transmitters. A directional transmitting array of the horizontal doublet type, with reflector of similar design, has been erected for the New Zealand—Australian radio-telephone service which was obtained by the addition of a 5-kW. modulating unit to the existing 3-kW. short-wave continuous-wave transmitter. A second array has been provided for the Pacific Islands radio-telegraph service with a considerable improvement in reliability. The change of voltage in the Wellington City power-supply system necessitated the complete replacement of the electrical wiring and the substitution of all direct-current motors by alternating-current type. To minimize the risk of an entire interruption to the power-supply, provision has been made for the supply to be obtained over alternative routes and for emergency service to be given from a storage-battery source.

A fire at the Auckland Radio Station in May caused slight damage, necessitating the renewal of most of the inside wiring. Owing to interference from electric-power reticulation, the remotely-controlled receiver previously located at the Avondale Post-office was moved in July last to Takapuna. An improved service has resulted.

RADIO-TELEGRAPHIC CHARGES TO OR FROM SHIPS IN NEW ZEALAND WATERS.

From the 1st April, 1931, the charge for the transmission of an ordinary radio-telegram to or from ships (other than His Majesty's ships when in New Zealand waters, ships registered in New Zealand or Australia, and ships trading exclusively between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Dominion of New Zealand, or between ports on the coast of New Zealand) from or to any telegraph-office in the Dominion of New Zealand has been increased to 11d. per word.

The charge for the transmission of an ordinary radio-telegram to or from ships registered in New Zealand or Australia and ships trading exclusively between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Dominion of New Zealand, or (except in special cases) between ports on the coast of the Dominion of New Zealand, from or to any telegraph-office in the Dominion of New Zealand, has been increased to 6d. per word.

RADIO-TELEGRAPHIC CHARGES ON MESSAGES TO AND FROM VESSELS BELONGING TO NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT.

From the 1st September, 1930, radio-telegraphic charges on messages to and from vessels belonging to the New Zealand Government, which are engaged in Government service in New Zealand waters, were reduced from 5d. to 2½d. per word, with a minimum charge of 1s. 3d. per message.

BROADCASTING.

On the 31st March, 1931, there was a total of 62,713 radio-receiving licenses on issue throughout the Dominion. Of this total, 26,023 licenses were held in the Wellington District, 19,016 in the Auckland District, 10,543 in Canterbury, and 7,131 in Otago. Included in the totals are 246 licenses issued free to blind persons.

The continued increase in the number of licenses is adequate proof of the increasing popularity of radio broadcast entertainment.

The silent night previously observed at Station 2YA, Wellington, has been abolished, and a daily schedule of transmissions is now observed from that station.

Eleven low-power private broadcasting-stations were opened during the year, three being at Auckland, two at Hastings, and one each at Dannevirke, Gisborne, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Wairoa, and Wanganui. Permission was also given for the opening of a private broadcasting-station at Apia, Samoa.

The radio-inspection staff has continued its activities, and considerable success has been attained in the elimination of the various types of interference.

Many persons still fail to realize their obligations in regard to obtaining licenses for radio-receiving apparatus. During the year 391 persons were proceeded against for operating unlicensed stations, the fines inflicted totalling £427.

The contract with the Radio Broadcasting Co. expires at the end of 1931. The whole question of broadcasting will now be reviewed.

The Department's special facilities are still, wherever possible, made available to the Broadcasting Co. for the purpose of relaying programmes between centres. A notable overseas rebroadcast was effected on the 15th March, when, at 5.30 a.m., the Prince of Wales's speech at the opening of the British Empire Exhibition at Buenos Aires was rebroadcast throughout New Zealand. The radio link on this occasion was the longest yet utilized for such a purpose in New Zealand. The medium consisted of an 8,000-mile section of a commercial radio channel between Buenos Aires and Rugby, England, whence the signals were retransmitted to New Zealand, a total distance of approximately 19,000 miles. Reception at Wellington was effected by means of the Department's overseas short-wave receiving-station at Mount Crawford, which passed on the signals to the Wellington Broadcasting-station.

A notable use of radio telephony was made on the evening of 5th February, when, by the aid of the Department's commercial short-wave radio-telephone channel to Australia, an account of the earthquake which took place two days previously was transmitted to Australia and to the United States of America. In the case of the Australian broadcast, the speech was conveyed by land-line from the A.W.A. Station 2ME, Sydney (the terminal of the trans-Tasman radio service) to the A class stations in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide, which broadcast the account to Australian listeners. The second transmission was relayed on short waves by station 2ME, Sydney, to station W2XAF, Schenectady, N.Y., U.S.A., which passed it on to a broadcasting network in the United States. This transmission was of a two-way character, consisting partly of questions and answers between the American and the Wellington announcers. Both transmissions were reported as being excellently received by the terminal broadcasting-stations.

WIRELESS SHIP-STATION LICENSES.

The number of wireless ship-station licenses issued for the year 1930 was 74.

TELEPHONE EXCHANGE SERVICES.

DEVELOPMENT OF TELEPHONE-EXCHANGE SYSTEMS.

The development of the local-exchange systems during the year has been somewhat less than in the past few years. The number of new connections (subscribers' main stations) joined up was 12,779, which is almost the same as the previous year; but the number of relinquishments of subscribers' main stations was 8,575, or over two thousand more than in the previous year. In view of all the circumstances, however, the growth of the systems, as evidenced by a net gain of approximately four thousand subscribers' main stations, can be regarded as satisfactory. Taking into consideration the telephones of all kinds relinquished as well as new telephone-stations connected, the total number of telephone-stations at the end of the year was 157,767. If to this number is added the private-line telephones connected with toll stations and non-departmental exchanges (3,972) the number of telephones in service on the 31st March, 1931, was 161,739. The total number of telephone-stations has been adversely influenced by the temporary loss of approximately three thousand subscribers in the Napier and Hastings areas. Provision is being made for an anticipated early resumption of normal telephone-exchange service in the Hawke's Bay District.

Amongst other facilities introduced during the year was a new design of automatic telephone fitted with a hand-microphone. The new type of telephone is improved in both design and operation, and, although a small additional rental will be payable for its use, the general style and increased utility of the instrument should commend it to telephone-users.

A brief summary of the year's operations in regard to the development and maintenance of the telephone-exchange systems in the Dominion is as follows:—

The opening of new magneto exchanges at Colville, Te Angra, and Waiotira.

The conversion to automatic working of the Birkenhead telephone-exchange area.

The extension of the switching equipment at ten automatic exchanges and nineteen manual exchanges.

- The laying of twenty-five miles of underground-cable ducts.
 The laying or erecting of 102 miles of lead-covered cable, containing 18,196 miles of wire, for subscribers' circuits.
 The erection of 838 miles of pole-line and 6,781 miles of open aerial wire for telephone-exchange subscribers' circuits.
 The reconstruction of the open-wire systems at twenty-four exchanges.
 The connection of 12,779 new subscribers' main stations and the disconnection of 8,575 subscribers' main stations.
 The installation of sixty-six public call offices.
 The maintenance of 157,767 telephone-stations.
 The installation of additional secondary batteries at the Wellesley Street, Mount Eden, Onchunga, South Dunedin, and Dunedin automatic exchanges.
 The installation of rectifier charging-plants at Onchunga and Blenheim.
 The replacement of hand-ringers by pole-changers at Kaponga and Ranfurly.
 The installation of frequency-converters at a number of exchanges in replacement of motor-generator sets and pole-changers for the purpose of improving the ringing facilities at those exchanges.

In addition to the work enumerated in the foregoing summary a considerable number of extensions to the switching and cabling portion of local telephone-exchange systems was commenced but not completed during the year.

The length of various items of telephone-exchange plant in existence on the 31st March, 1930, and 1931, respectively, was as follows :—

	Pole-line.	Single Duct Line.	Cable.		Wire.			
			Under-ground.	Aerial.	In Under-ground Cable.	In Aerial Cable.	Open Aerial.	Under all Headings.
	Miles.	Chains.	Chains.	Chains.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.
In existence on 31st March, 1930	14,349	39,243	84,137*	45,180	351,365	59,358	102,373	513,096
Erected during year	839	2,015	5,397	2,766	15,031	3,165	6,781	24,977
Dismantled during year	62	..	902	3,188	3,331	4,839	1,335	9,505
In existence on 31st March, 1931	15,126	41,258	88,632	44,758	363,065	57,684	107,819†	528,568

* Revised figures.

† Includes 117 miles of earth-working circuit.

The percentages of the total wire-mileage in underground and aerial cables and open aerial wire respectively for the year ended 31st March, 1931, are as under :—

Telephone-exchange wire in underground cables	..	..	..	69 per cent.
Telephone-exchange wire in aerial cables	..	..	..	11 „
Telephone-exchange open aerial wire	..	..	..	20 „

TELEPHONE STATISTICS.

The steady growth of the telephone system is exemplified in the following table, which shows annually since 1922 the number of exchanges, the total wire-mileage, the revenue, and the total number of telephone-stations, together with the number of telephones for each 1,000 of population of the Dominion :—

Year.	Number of Exchanges.	Miles of Wire.	Revenue.	Number of Telephone-stations.	
				Total.	Per 1,000 Population.
1922	..	301	£ 614,367	94,683	72.78
1923	..	320	595,967	107,036	80.78
1924	..	327	830,470	111,441	82.67
1925	..	340	867,218	120,097*	87.09
1926	..	341	980,281	130,186*	94.40
1927	..	342	995,071	137,307*	95.48
1928	..	344	1,057,177	144,552*	99.40
1929	..	351	1,135,795	152,541*	103.72
1930	..	349	1,206,714	161,323*	108.37
1931	..	349	1,238,649	161,739*	107.04†

* Includes approximately 4,000 non-exchange stations.

† Decrease owing to temporary loss of subscribers due to Hawke's Bay earthquake.

The manner in which the exchanges are classified, the number of exchanges in each class, and the number of stations connected therewith on the 31st March, 1931, are shown in the following table :—

	Class I. Exchanges or Networks observing Continuous Attendance and having more than 3,500 Paying Subscribers' Main Stations connected therewith.	Class II. Exchanges or Networks observing Continuous Attendance and having 1,001 to 3,500 Paying Subscribers' Main Stations connected therewith.	Class III. Exchanges or Networks observing Continuous Attendance and having 201 to 1,000 Paying Subscribers' Main Stations connected therewith.	Class IV. Exchanges or Networks where the Attendance is restricted.	Dominion Totals.
Subscribers' main stations ..	45,445	22,332	35,197	24,632	127,606
Toll and service stations ..	711	458	1,147	1,596	3,912
Public call offices	554	100	76	5	735
Extension stations—					
P.B.X.	9,156	1,682	716	99	11,653
Ordinary	7,666	3,018	2,306	871	13,861
Telephone-stations: Class totals..	63,532	27,590	39,442	27,203	157,767*
Number of exchanges in each class	4	11	64	270	349
Percentage of new connections made with each class of exchange during the year	42	19	21	18	..

* The total number of telephone stations would have been 3,000 more than the figures shown had not a temporary loss of subscribers been caused by the Hawke's Bay earthquake.

In addition to the stations shown in the preceding table there were 3,972 stations connected by private telephone-lines directly or indirectly with departmental toll stations, making a grand total of 161,739 telephone-stations on the 31st March, 1931.

The following table shows the number of telephone-stations in each engineering district on the 31st March, 1930 and 1931, respectively, and the percentage of increase in each case :—

Engineering District.	Number of Telephone Stations on 31st March,						Percentage of Increase.
	1930.			1931.			
	Main Stations.	Extension Stations.	Total.	Main Stations.	Extension Stations.	Total.	
Auckland	40,089	7,148	47,237	41,750	7,459	49,209	4.2
Wellington	54,041	11,041	65,082	52,147	10,358	62,505	3.9*
Canterbury	19,533	4,406	23,939	20,272	4,531	24,803	3.6
Otago	17,725	3,040	20,765	18,084	3,166	21,250	2.3
Totals	131,388	25,635	157,023	132,253	25,514	157,767	0.5

* Decrease.

The number of telephone stations (main and extension) connected with each of the fourteen principal exchanges on the 31st March, 1931, was—Auckland, 21,403; Wellington, 20,079; Christchurch, 12,786; Dunedin, 8,542; Wanganui, 3,843; Palmerston North, 3,437; Hamilton, 3,232; Invercargill, 2,915; Gisborne, 2,736; Timaru, 2,187; New Plymouth, 2,252; Masterton, 2,094; Nelson, 1,740; Hawera, 1,453.

The number of party and rural lines on the 31st March, 1931, was 11,257, to which were connected 44,971 main stations—an increase of 742 and 2,263 respectively on the figures for the previous year.

The following table shows, for each class of exchange, the respective percentages of business and residential stations, also the respective percentages of individual- and party-line stations, on the 31st March, 1931:—

Percentage of	Class I Exchanges.	Class II Exchanges.	Class III Exchanges.	Class IV Exchanges.	Dominion Percentages.
Business stations	36	32	27	19	30
Residential stations	64	68	73	81	70
	100	100	100	100	100
Individual-line stations	90	75	53	32	65
Party- and rural-line stations	10	25	47	68	35
	100	100	100	100	100

AUTOMATIC TELEPHONE - EXCHANGES.

CHRISTCHURCH METROPOLITAN AREA.

The new automatic telephone-exchange system installed at Christchurch has now been in operation for some eighteen months, and during that time has met all the demands made upon it. The new system is a decided improvement on the old mixed manual and automatic system, and is much appreciated by the Christchurch public, particularly the business community. During the year the switching equipment at Christchurch was extended by two thousand lines, and with this addition the plant should be capable of meeting normal demands for telephone service for some years.

AUCKLAND, WELLINGTON, AND DUNEDIN DISTRICTS.

The automatic telephone exchanges in the Auckland, Wellington, and Dunedin districts have given satisfactory service during the year, and no special comment is called for. Extensions, representing a total of 2,280 lines, were added to exchanges in these districts in the twelve months.

CONVERSION TO AUTOMATIC WORKING OF THE BIRKENHEAD TELEPHONE EXCHANGE AREA BY CONNECTION TO AUCKLAND AUTOMATIC TELEPHONE-EXCHANGE SYSTEM.

The residents of Birkenhead and Northcote have been provided with automatic telephone-exchange service by connecting them to the Ponsonby Automatic Exchange by means of a submarine cable crossing the harbour. This cable will enable up to three hundred subscribers in the Birkenhead-Northcote area to be connected with the Ponsonby Automatic Exchange, which will give them access to the whole of the subscribers in the Auckland metropolitan area.

CONVERSION TO AUTOMATIC WORKING OF MARTON AND WHANGAREI TELEPHONE EXCHANGES.

The switching-apparatus for the new automatic telephone exchanges at Marton and Whangarei has been received in the Dominion, and good progress is being made with the installation of the Marton equipment. After the installation at Marton is completed the work at Whangarei will be undertaken. When the two exchanges mentioned are converted to full automatic working, both towns will possess high-grade automatic telephone-exchange systems, capable, with extensions from time to time, of providing service for many years. Details of the equipment to be provided at Marton and Whangarei were given in last year's report.

CONVERSION TO AUTOMATIC WORKING OF HASTINGS TELEPHONE EXCHANGE.

As a result of the partial destruction of the manually-operated central-battery telephone exchange at Hastings the installation of the 2,300 lines of step-by-step automatic equipment which was in progress at the time of the Hawke's Bay earthquake is being accelerated. Although efficient service is being obtained from the present temporary switching arrangements at Hastings, the early completion of the automatic system is desirable, and it is anticipated that the work will be completed and the conversion to automatic working effected at an early date.

CONVERSION TO AUTOMATIC WORKING OF LOWER HUTT TELEPHONE EXCHANGE.

A contract for the equipment required to convert the Lower Hutt Telephone Exchange to automatic working was placed in 1930. The equipment is now coming to hand, and the installation will be proceeded with as soon as the building is available. Details of the equipment to be provided at Lower Hutt were given in last year's report.

DESTRUCTION OF NAPIER AUTOMATIC-SWITCHING SYSTEM.

The Napier automatic telephone exchange, which comprised 2,200 individual lines and one hundred two-party lines, and which was brought into service on the 28th August, 1927, was totally destroyed by the fire which followed the Hawke's Bay earthquake on the 3rd February. The steps taken to restore the telephone-exchange service are detailed in this report at page 13.

AUTOMATIC PRIVATE-BRANCH EXCHANGES.

There is a steady demand for the installation of automatic private-branch exchanges in the larger business houses where the "interphone" key-box system does not meet requirements. Although it was not until 1926 that private automatic branch exchanges were introduced into the Dominion, there are at present sixty-five such exchanges in operation, while an additional sixteen are under order or are in course of installation.

PARTY-LINE TELEPHONE RENTALS.

Adjustments of rentals consequent on the addition of subscribers to or the withdrawal of subscribers from party or rural telephone lines are now made from the first day of the month succeeding the change instead of, as in the past, from the date on which the next six-monthly rental payment is due. It is considered that the new procedure will be more suitable to the wishes of subscribers generally.

PUBLISHING OF TELEPHONE DIRECTORIES.

With a view to effecting a saving in the cost of printing and publishing telephone directories, it has been decided, as a temporary measure, to issue telephone directories yearly instead of half-yearly. The change will result in a saving of from £5,000 to £6,000 annually. The longer period during which the telephone directories will be in use has been provided for by a better quality of paper for the cover. In view of the longer intervals between the publications of the directories, six-monthly lists of additions, &c., have been arranged for each directory.

TELEPHONE-EXCHANGE SERVICE: TERM OF CONTRACT.

In view of the new system under which telephone subscribers are enabled to pay telephone rental on a monthly basis, it has been decided to reduce, in ordinary circumstances, the term of contract from one year to one month. Previously, subscribers were obliged to enter into contracts to hold service for a minimum period of one year. The term of contract for one month applies only to subscribers situated within base-rate areas of exchanges. In respect of new connections beyond base-rate areas, the term of contract is to be for one year, except that where nominal installation expenses are incurred the contract is not required to exceed one month. In cases where heavy construction charges are involved beyond base-rate areas, the term of contract is to be extended by one year for approximately every £200 of capital expenditure involved, with a maximum term of five years.

TELEPHONE-EXCHANGE CONNECTIONS: REDUCTION OF SERVICE-CONNECTION FEE IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.

In many cases telephone-exchange subscribers who vacate their premises and who do not desire to continue telephone service fail to notify the Department of their intention to relinquish their connections. Under the regulations any incoming tenant who desires to take over such a connection has either to pay a transfer fee of 5s. and assume liability for the rental from the beginning of the next rental period, or to pay a service-connection fee of £1 and assume liability for rental from the date he occupies the premises.

Approval has been given for reduction of the service-connection fee from £1 to 5s. in all cases in which service for a new subscriber can, without complications, be established by the use of wires and an instrument already in place, provided that no change is required in the type or situation of the instrument.

SPECIAL TELEPHONE-EXCHANGE ATTENDANCE ON SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS DURING SUMMER MONTHS.

During the period 2nd November, 1930, to 26th April, 1931, the Sunday and holiday attendance usually observed at a number of the smaller exchanges—viz., 9 to 10 a.m. and 5 to 6 p.m.—has been extended to run from 9 a.m. to noon and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. The question whether such attendance is to be extended as a permanent arrangement will depend upon the demand for the facility as indicated by the traffic results.

FIRE-ALARM TELEPHONE CIRCUITS: LISTING BY TELEPHONE AUTHORITIES.

The charges made by the Department in respect of fire-alarm telephone circuits leased by fire authorities have been reviewed. As a result it has been decided in the case of those lines which were in existence prior to the 1st October, 1923, and which have been erected at the cost of fire authorities, to reduce the annual charges from £4 per mile to £2 10s. per mile for metallic circuits, and from £3 per mile to £1 10s. per mile for earthworking circuits.

The reduction took effect from the 1st October, 1930.

LOUD-RINGING EXTENSION BELLS.

It has been found that there is a considerable demand on the part of telephone-exchange subscribers for the installation of loud-ringing extension bells in positions where the ordinary extension bells would not be audible. Applications for such equipment are now acceded to. Ordinary extension bells are installed upon payment of an installation charge of 12s. 6d. and a rental charge of 7s. 6d. per annum, or 8d. per month. In the case of applications for loud-ringing bells, the same installation charge (12s. 6d.) is applied, and the rental charge has been fixed at 10s. per annum, or at 11d. per month.

APPENDIX.

Table No. 1.

TABLE SHOWING THE NUMBER AND AMOUNT OF MONEY-ORDERS ISSUED AND OF MONEY-ORDERS PAYABLE IN NEW ZEALAND SINCE THE YEAR 1863.

Issued in the Dominion.

Year.	Com- mission received.	Where payable.								Total.	
		In the Dominion.		United Kingdom.*		Australia and other British Possessions.		Foreign Countries.†			
		No.	Amount.	No.	Amount.	No.	Amount.	No.	Amount.	No.	Amount.
1863	£ 1,057	2,201	£ 9,614	4,740	£ 21,944	4,645	£ 24,145	..	£ ..	11,586	£ 55,703
1873	3,562	34,288	142,642	11,913	48,548	6,150	28,068	..	..	52,351	219,258
1883	9,023	132,232	402,559	26,211	91,634	14,113	46,940	..	..	172,556	541,133
1893	10,249	146,133	576,359	29,616	86,545	35,208	88,025	..	..	210,957	750,929
1903	15,882	273,535	1,108,067	63,309	157,790	59,468	150,368	..	..	396,312	1,416,225
1913	16,872	516,536	2,821,624	100,634	336,992	73,575	199,158	..	..	690,745	3,357,774
1923	28,357	545,605	3,849,423	54,461	223,143	68,044	284,778	16,869	32,815	684,979	4,390,159
1924	28,542	580,569	4,113,813	57,175	232,436	75,743	312,624	18,024	34,056	731,511	4,692,929
1925	28,843	610,972	4,406,461	64,777	259,439	72,519	278,050	18,421	33,280	766,689	4,977,230
1926	24,746	635,078	4,453,878	67,570	273,758	70,774	270,065	19,688	35,426	793,110	5,033,127
1927	24,775	639,889	4,416,182	69,764	276,747	73,021	265,752	20,807	36,409	803,481	4,995,090
1928	24,884	642,136	4,406,187	69,366	266,072	73,786	267,411	22,597	37,852	807,885	4,977,522
1929	25,673	664,049	4,609,226	70,540	274,672	76,230	263,929	24,539	39,726	835,358	5,187,553
1930	35,603	669,484	4,497,547	61,611	251,730	80,303	283,973	22,107	36,379	833,505	5,069,629

Drawn on the Dominion.

Year.	Where issued.								Total.	
	In the Dominion.		United Kingdom.*		Australia and other British Possessions.		Foreign Countries.†			
	No.	Amount.	No.	Amount.	No.	Amount.	No.	Amount.	No.	Amount.
1863	2,067	£ 9,169	415	£ 1,824	558	£ 3,078	..	£ ..	3,040	£ 14,071
1873	34,288	142,642	1,482	6,626	1,668	7,689	..	..	37,438	156,957
1883	132,232	402,559	3,725	15,553	5,697	23,300	..	..	141,654	441,411
1893	146,133	576,359	8,746	32,617	10,679	40,929	..	..	165,558	649,905
1903	273,535	1,108,067	13,035	49,181	17,777	68,340	..	..	304,347	1,225,589
1913	516,536	2,821,624	12,693	70,684	31,450	110,487	..	..	560,679	3,002,194
1923	545,605	3,849,423	11,042	63,313	26,042	123,703	1,813	8,669	584,502	4,045,108
1924	580,569	4,113,813	8,310	60,862	28,543	127,350	2,348	10,369	619,770	4,312,334
1925	610,972	4,406,461	9,857	69,098	27,318	119,073	2,140	8,391	650,287	4,603,023
1926	635,078	4,453,878	10,047	70,948	28,935	124,952	2,334	10,326	676,394	4,660,104
1927	639,889	4,416,182	11,646	80,015	32,791	136,763	2,428	9,301	686,804	4,642,261
1928	642,136	4,406,187	10,607	70,151	32,650	138,068	2,636	9,358	688,029	4,623,764
1929	664,049	4,609,226	10,953	68,273	32,973	129,798	2,923	10,875	710,898	4,818,172
1930	669,483	4,497,547	10,046	62,617	30,776	126,051	2,650	9,270	712,955	4,695,485

* Includes foreign offices to year 1915.

† In previous years included in United Kingdom and foreign offices.

Table No. 2.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS-BANK.—GENERAL STATEMENT.

TABLE SHOWING THE BUSINESS OF THE POST OFFICE SAVINGS-BANK IN THE VARIOUS POSTAL DISTRICTS OF NEW ZEALAND DURING THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1931.

Postal Districts.	Number of Branches at the Close of the Period.	Number of Deposits received during the Period.		Total Amount of Deposits received during the Period.		Average Amount of each Deposit received during the Period.		Number of Withdrawals during the Period.	Total Amount of Withdrawals during the Period.		Average Amount of each Withdrawal during the Period.		Excess of Deposits over Withdrawals during the Period.	Excess of Withdrawals over Deposits during the Period.		Interest for the Period.		Number of Accounts opened during the Period.	Number of Accounts closed during the Period.	Number of Accounts remaining open at Close of the Period.	Total Amount standing to the Credit of all Open Accounts, inclusive of Interest to the Close of the Period.		Average Amount standing to the Credit of each Open Account at the Close of the Period.			
		£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.		£	s. d.	£	s. d.		£	s. d.	£	s. d.				£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.
Auckland ..	183	3,964,694	1 6 14 18 5	3,964,694	1 6 14 18 5	261,920	4 6 32 633 15 5	17 13 9	4,632,633	15 5 17 13 9	667,939	13 11 2	..	278,359	14 2 15,400	13,604	145,933	7,553,992	0 4 51 15 3	15,400	13,604	145,933	7,553,992	0 4 51 15 3	7,553,992	0 4 51 15 3
Blenheim ..	16	250,648	2 14 15 1	250,648	2 14 15 1	15,762	287,523	9 7 18 4 10	287,523	9 7 18 4 10	36,874	12 5 1,116	..	22,227	17 5 1,116	809	11,493	596,348	17 7 51 17 9	1,116	809	11,493	596,348	17 7 51 17 9	596,348	17 7 51 17 9
Christchurch ..	73	3,903,253	6 4 14 12 10	3,903,253	6 4 14 12 10	248,395	4,361,633	16 4 17 11 2	4,361,633	16 4 17 11 2	458,380	10 0 11,565	..	289,721	11 1 11,565	7,928	130,764	7,809,371	18 8 59 14 5	11,565	7,928	130,764	7,809,371	18 8 59 14 5	7,809,371	18 8 59 14 5
Dunedin ..	79	1,688,212	8 14 15 4	1,688,212	8 14 15 4	100,491	2,089,308	17 3 20 15 10	2,089,308	17 3 20 15 10	401,095	17 7 6,520	..	157,061	5 8 6,520	5,279	75,143	4,134,453	11 6 55 0 5	6,520	5,279	75,143	4,134,453	11 6 55 0 5	4,134,453	11 6 55 0 5
Gisborne ..	26	520,440	13 1 13 18 2	520,440	13 1 13 18 2	32,769	591,238	19 0 18 0 10	591,238	19 0 18 0 10	70,798	5 11 2,248	..	40,611	7 2 2,248	1,781	22,509	1,110,242	4 9 49 6 6	2,248	1,781	22,509	1,110,242	4 9 49 6 6	1,110,242	4 9 49 6 6
Greymouth ..	25	316,959	5 10 14 10 1	316,959	5 10 14 10 1	15,145	354,466	16 8 23 8 1	354,466	16 8 23 8 1	37,507	10 10 1,647	..	30,377	12 5 1,647	1,090	14,550	819,279	2 11 56 6 2	1,647	1,090	14,550	819,279	2 11 56 6 2	819,279	2 11 56 6 2
Hamilton ..	92	1,416,102	8 3 13 15 10	1,416,102	8 3 13 15 10	79,523	1,565,808	19 3 19 13 10	1,565,808	19 3 19 13 10	149,706	11 0 8,272	..	88,367	0 4 8,272	5,634	46,904	2,428,208	8 0 51 15 5	8,272	5,634	46,904	2,428,208	8 0 51 15 5	2,428,208	8 0 51 15 5
Invercargill ..	38	565,339	14 7 14 7 7	565,339	14 7 14 7 7	34,971	723,830	0 6 20 14 0	723,830	0 6 20 14 0	158,490	5 11 3,240	..	61,109	3 1 3,240	2,333	31,652	1,593,688	10 5 50 7 0	3,240	2,333	31,652	1,593,688	10 5 50 7 0	1,593,688	10 5 50 7 0
Napier ..	42	1,185,125	15 6 15 18 0	1,185,125	15 6 15 18 0	66,694	1,352,797	16 5 20 5 8	1,352,797	16 5 20 5 8	167,672	0 11 4,816	..	81,232	19 5 4,816	4,003	41,796	2,218,759	18 4 53 1 9	4,816	4,003	41,796	2,218,759	18 4 53 1 9	2,218,759	18 4 53 1 9
Nelson ..	31	477,593	0 5 14 16 6	477,593	0 5 14 16 6	26,470	556,010	14 11 21 0 1	556,010	14 11 21 0 1	78,417	14 6 2,296	..	38,507	1 4 2,296	1,331	19,101	1,028,089	19 4 53 16 6	2,296	1,331	19,101	1,028,089	19 4 53 16 6	1,028,089	19 4 53 16 6
New Plymouth ..	37	962,115	17 4 14 7 8	962,115	17 4 14 7 8	50,455	1,155,110	0 8 22 17 11	1,155,110	0 8 22 17 11	192,894	3 4 5,419	..	65,881	8 8 5,419	3,440	34,216	1,780,688	10 7 52 0 10	5,419	3,440	34,216	1,780,688	10 7 52 0 10	1,780,688	10 7 52 0 10
Oamaru ..	12	320,982	7 5 17 10 10	320,982	7 5 17 10 10	17,397	358,226	16 7 20 11 10	358,226	16 7 20 11 10	37,244	9 2 1,338	..	24,383	4 9 1,338	865	10,810	663,150	6 6 61 6 11	1,338	865	10,810	663,150	6 6 61 6 11	663,150	6 6 61 6 11
Palmerston North ..	41	1,306,775	11 4 14 16 3	1,306,775	11 4 14 16 3	76,559	1,522,428	16 11 19 17 9	1,522,428	16 11 19 17 9	215,653	5 7 5,708	..	87,832	18 0 5,708	3,730	37,542	2,380,833	12 10 63 8 4	5,708	3,730	37,542	2,380,833	12 10 63 8 4	2,380,833	12 10 63 8 4
Thames ..	43	491,284	5 6 14 1 0	491,284	5 6 14 1 0	23,583	600,888	14 3 25 9 7	600,888	14 3 25 9 7	109,604	8 9 2,975	..	39,407	3 0 2,975	2,272	25,283	1,051,596	13 5 41 11 11	2,975	2,272	25,283	1,051,596	13 5 41 11 11	1,051,596	13 5 41 11 11
Timaru ..	18	759,927	3 1 17 18 5	759,927	3 1 17 18 5	39,611	912,511	16 10 23 0 9	912,511	16 10 23 0 9	152,584	13 9 2,440	..	60,315	11 4 2,440	1,857	25,210	1,598,975	0 2 63 8 6	2,440	1,857	25,210	1,598,975	0 2 63 8 6	1,598,975	0 2 63 8 6
Wanganui ..	41	886,496	19 9 14 1 3	886,496	19 9 14 1 3	53,215	1,050,550	10 4 19 14 10	1,050,550	10 4 19 14 10	164,053	10 7 3,598	..	67,090	1 0 3,598	3,130	37,769	1,814,226	16 7 48 0 8	3,598	3,130	37,769	1,814,226	16 7 48 0 8	1,814,226	16 7 48 0 8
Wellington ..	61	5,324,248	18 9 13 8 5	5,324,248	18 9 13 8 5	319,600	5,722,100	17 11 17 18 1	5,722,100	17 11 17 18 1	397,851	19 2 18,496	..	314,472	9 1 18,496	13,077	157,499	8,641,672	10 4 54 17 5	18,496	13,077	157,499	8,641,672	10 4 54 17 5	8,641,672	10 4 54 17 5
Westport ..	19	147,598	11 2 14 5 0	147,598	11 2 14 5 0	7,563	173,191	10 5 22 18 0	173,191	10 5 22 18 0	25,592	19 3 839	..	14,548	1 11 839	569	7,279	383,794	8 2 52 14 6	839	569	7,279	383,794	8 2 52 14 6	383,794	8 2 52 14 6
Western Samoa ..	2	29,271	1 10 16 6 8	29,271	1 10 16 6 8	1,657	36,299	5 10 21 18 2	36,299	5 10 21 18 2	7,028	4 0 241	..	1,462	6 7 241	204	1,475	38,954	1 10 25 4 11	241	204	1,475	38,954	1 10 25 4 11	38,954	1 10 25 4 11
Rarotonga ..	5	14,498	2 9 15 15 11	14,498	2 9 15 15 11	1,247	16,776	10 11 13 9 1	16,776	10 11 13 9 1	2,278	8 2 124	..	856	0 10 124	76	1,115	22,220	8 10 20 0 8	124	76	1,115	22,220	8 10 20 0 8	22,220	8 10 20 0 8
Totals for year ended 31st March, 1931	884	1,695,143	24 531,569	1 3 14 9 51,473,027	28,063,338	6 0 19 1 0	..	..	1,763,824	17 3 98,298	73,012	3,531,769	4 9 1,763,824	17 3 98,298	73,012	878,043	47,668,547	1 1 54 5 9	98,298	73,012	878,043	47,668,547	1 1 54 5 9	47,668,547	1 1 54 5 9	

Table No. 3.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS-BANK.—GENERAL STATEMENT.

TABLE SHOWING THE BUSINESS OF THE POST OFFICE SAVINGS-BANK IN NEW ZEALAND, BY TEN-YEAR PERIODS, FROM 1868 TO THE 31ST DECEMBER, 1918, AND YEARLY PERIODS THEREAFTER TO THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1931.

Year.	Number of Branches of the Post Office Savings Bank open at the Close of the Year.	Number of Deposits received during the Year.	Total Amount of Deposits received during the Year.			Average Amount of each Deposit received during the Year.	Number of Withdrawals during the Year.	Total Amount of Withdrawals during the Year.			Average Amount of each Withdrawal during the Year.	Excess of Deposits over Withdrawals during the Year.			Interest for the Year.	Number of Accounts opened during the Year.	Number of Accounts closed during the Year.	Number of Accounts remaining open at Close of the Year.	Total Amount standing to the Credit of all Open Accounts, inclusive of Interest to the Close of the Year.			Average Amount standing to the Credit of each Open Account at the Close of the Year.									
			£	s.	d.			£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.					£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	
Year ended 31st Mar., 1931	884	1,695,143	24,551,569	1	3	14	9	51,473,027	28,063,338	6	0	19	1	0	..	..	3,531,769	4	9	1,763,824	17	3	98,298	73,012	878,043	47,668,547	1	1	54	5	9
Year ended 31st Mar., 1930	882	1,700,460	28,561,854	4	10	16	15	111,342,113	29,575,993	16	10	22	0	9	..	..	1,014,139	12	0	1,806,414	0	1	97,932	73,471	852,757	49,436,491	8	7	57	19	5
Year ended 31st Mar., 1929	879	1,618,656	27,252,381	9	0	16	16	91,285,256	28,111,940	16	9	21	17	6	..	..	859,559	7	9	1,745,050	5	4	93,111	69,540	828,296	48,644,217	0	6	58	14	7
Year ended 31st Mar., 1928	870	1,570,493	27,611,066	5	1	17	11	71,274,906	30,584,997	14	4	23	19	10	..	..	2,973,931	9	3	1,747,155	13	9	93,331	72,433	804,725	47,758,726	2	11	59	6	11
Year ended 31st Mar., 1927	875	1,509,909	29,456,383	2	7	19	10	21,224,764	30,149,628	17	3	24	12	4	..	..	693,245	14	8	1,767,426	2	8	97,713	72,041	783,827	48,985,501	18	5	62	9	11
Year ended 31st Mar., 1926	870	1,446,530	31,833,621	9	5	22	0	11,197,985	32,602,505	17	2	27	4	3	..	..	768,884	7	9	1,731,577	17	2	104,447	81,440	758,155	47,911,321	10	5	63	3	11
Year ended 31st Mar., 1925	855	1,371,009	29,582,897	2	9	21	11	71,108,291	30,413,609	3	11	27	8	10	..	..	830,712	1	2	1,680,919	10	10	95,595	70,604	735,148	46,948,628	1	0	63	17	3
Year ended 31st Mar., 1924	846	1,261,141	29,598,372	4	8	23	9	41,075,037	29,510,320	19	6	27	9	0	..	..	1,086,836	4	11	1,605,525	1	10	78,490	66,630	690,790	44,360,393	1	6	64	4	4
Year ended 31st Mar., 1923	840	1,175,104	26,682,426	11	4	22	14	21,081,300	27,769,262	16	3	25	13	8	..	..	1,110,233	16	5	1,599,907	2	0	89,859	75,748	678,930	43,841,704	4	7	64	11	6
Year ended 31st Mar., 1922	831	1,227,591	29,135,997	10	0	23	14	61,119,662	30,236,231	6	5	27	0	0	..	..	1,110,233	16	5	1,599,907	2	0	89,859	75,748	678,930	43,841,704	4	7	64	11	6
*Fifteen months ended 31st March, 1921	819	1,694,206	44,302,852	5	4	26	12	51,458,008	41,162,486	9	10	28	4	8	..	..	1,818,584	5	2	1,818,584	5	2	152,930	118,894	664,819	43,352,030	19	0	65	4	2
Totals for 1919	794	1,289,161	29,758,448	9	7	23	1	994,247	25,962,378	2	6	26	2	3	..	..	1,178,935	6	6	1,178,935	6	6	118,109	77,531	630,783	38,393,130	18	4	60	17	4
" 1918	786	1,213,353	18,101,104	18	1	14	18	4	727,729	14,938,841	10	0	20	10	..	..	1,059,471	17	8	1,059,471	17	8	76,869	53,015	590,205	33,418,125	4	9	56	12	5
" 1908	593	706,101	9,674,075	4	0	13	14	0	484,672	9,417,820	10	3	19	8	..	..	379,808	6	7	379,808	6	7	80,133	57,829	342,077	12,159,293	18	1	35	10	11
" 1898	409	281,749	3,279,611	7	5	11	12	10	196,764	3,194,893	16	7	16	4	..	..	128,128	16	6	128,128	16	6	37,265	23,628	169,968	4,957,771	5	5	29	3	5
" 1888	290	145,355	1,544,747	7	11	10	12	6	96,204	1,387,471	1	10	14	8	..	..	78,080	6	0	78,080	6	0	21,307	16,543	84,488	2,048,441	10	9	24	4	10
" 1878	147	69,908	762,084	12	0	10	18	0	42,746	742,033	14	3	17	7	..	..	31,664	12	9	31,664	12	9	13,005	9,634	32,132	819,071	8	2	25	9	9
" 1868	55	13,014	194,535	11	6	14	18	11	6,365	107,094	17	3	16	16	..	..	4,880	7	3	4,880	7	3	3,282	1,186	4,252	163,518	15	7	38	9	1
†Totals from 1st Feb. to 31st Dec., 1867	46	6,977	96,372	7	10	13	16	3	1,919	26,415	18	9	13	15	..	..	1,241	5	0	1,241	5	0	2,520	364	2,156	71,197	14	1	33	0	5

* Termination of savings-bank year altered from 31st December to 31st March, with effect from 31st March, 1921.

† The Post Office Savings-bank was established in the Dominion in February, 1867.

Table No. 4.

TABLE SHOWING THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF LETTERS AND LETTER-CARDS, POST-CARDS, BOOK-PACKETS, NEWSPAPERS, AND PARCELS POSTED AND DELIVERED IN THE SEVERAL POSTAL DISTRICTS OF NEW ZEALAND DURING THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1930.

Postal District.	Posted in the Dominion.				Delivered in the Dominion.				Total posted and delivered in the Dominion.						
	Letters and Letter-cards.	Post-cards.	Books, &c.	Newspapers.	Parcels.	Letters and Letter-cards.	Post-cards.	Books, &c.	Newspapers.	Parcels.	Letters and Letter-cards.	Post-cards.	Books, &c.	Newspapers.	Parcels.
Auckland	31,255,018	988,923	20,698,397	5,374,617	843,869	33,668,960	945,646	16,464,266	4,311,099	542,854	64,923,978	1,934,569	37,162,663	9,685,716	1,386,723
Blenheim	1,904,926	27,690	536,678	264,602	19,539	1,935,167	56,121	722,488	503,555	65,949	3,840,093	83,811	1,239,166	768,157	85,488
Christchurch	17,963,251	836,706	13,235,654	1,642,721	417,911	20,315,581	971,945	10,996,453	2,697,994	332,670	38,278,832	1,808,651	24,232,107	4,349,715	750,581
Dunedin	11,988,706	504,816	7,411,712	1,838,917	300,430	12,109,818	569,712	6,804,603	1,990,365	289,172	24,098,024	1,074,528	14,216,315	3,829,282	589,602
Gisborne	3,349,028	40,664	1,083,889	583,316	43,316	3,803,527	56,797	2,042,001	1,216,618	102,375	7,152,555	97,461	3,125,890	1,799,934	145,691
Greytown	1,860,754	39,273	570,713	291,577	34,684	2,185,625	64,051	824,031	503,984	82,277	4,046,379	163,324	1,394,744	795,561	116,961
Hamilton	10,533,698	325,468	3,141,459	1,076,585	92,729	10,463,830	428,935	5,304,928	1,974,687	273,026	20,997,528	734,403	8,646,387	3,051,272	365,755
Invercangill	7,314,201	202,553	3,400,825	679,978	72,358	6,806,358	247,299	3,465,189	1,193,296	142,376	14,120,559	449,852	6,866,014	1,873,274	214,734
Napier	7,203,818	129,454	2,917,759	774,171	72,384	7,484,789	171,951	4,006,197	1,423,942	173,784	14,688,607	301,405	6,923,956	2,198,113	246,168
Nelson	2,766,173	128,102	869,439	258,906	46,735	3,115,879	110,721	1,430,728	663,767	117,754	5,882,052	238,823	2,300,167	922,673	164,489
New Plymouth	4,986,529	139,555	2,496,541	630,629	59,943	5,801,185	170,716	3,532,290	1,097,876	157,768	10,787,714	310,271	5,828,831	1,728,505	217,711
Oamaru	1,550,292	41,158	609,937	147,901	17,771	1,801,839	102,570	1,033,565	382,486	44,096	3,352,131	143,728	1,643,502	530,387	61,857
Palmerston N.	6,472,415	139,659	3,138,171	693,964	79,391	7,232,966	215,046	4,432,597	1,253,278	174,473	13,763,381	334,703	7,370,768	1,947,242	253,864
Thames	3,329,780	64,870	1,280,456	378,040	34,086	3,977,922	165,295	2,287,363	813,111	121,810	7,307,702	230,165	3,808,332	1,191,151	153,896
Timaru	3,714,993	99,090	1,334,877	394,750	38,142	4,136,054	130,715	2,527,876	654,264	86,398	7,851,047	229,805	3,622,240	1,049,014	124,540
Wanganui	6,209,438	154,297	2,571,346	750,165	73,905	5,694,560	190,489	3,219,684	1,109,537	152,776	11,813,998	344,786	5,791,036	1,859,702	226,681
Wellington	28,747,220	473,254	17,794,734	5,176,223	864,822	28,914,007	610,099	12,429,716	4,076,266	401,789	57,661,227	1,083,353	30,224,450	9,252,489	1,266,611
Westport	804,895	10,842	104,582	118,677	15,106	1,261,234	29,419	438,048	345,540	51,220	2,063,129	40,261	542,630	464,217	66,326
Rarofonga	46,698	972	2,016	546	1,494	46,956	492	11,430	13,686	1,578	49,634	7,464	13,446	14,232	3,072
Western Samoa	150,432	2,724	3,156	19,434	738	330,936	4,920	4,260	323,028	3,696	480,468	7,644	7,416	342,462	4,434
Totals	152,152,265	4,341,070	83,202,341	21,095,719	3,129,353	160,995,793	5,242,939	81,977,713	26,548,379	3,317,841	313,148,058	9,584,009	165,180,054	47,644,098	6,447,194
Previous year	149,184,516	4,158,472	79,274,134	21,590,580	3,279,551	159,977,587	5,244,459	78,691,984	27,067,890	3,601,476	309,162,103	9,402,931	157,966,118	48,658,470	6,881,027

Table No. 5.

The following table shows the number and weight of parcels exchanged with other countries during the years 1929 and 1930:—

Places.	Received.				Despatched.			
	1929.		1930.		1929.		1930.	
	Number.	Weight.	Number.	Weight.	Number.	Weight.	Number.	Weight.
		lb.		lb.		lb.		lb.
Great Britain and Ireland and foreign countries via London	207,740	1,807,448	145,351	1,257,156	27,779	130,510	23,261	105,344
United States of America and possessions	65,787	425,580	52,295	317,411	4,736	19,147	4,634	18,535
Canada	15,338	151,223	16,015	191,160	2,005	6,603	1,799	6,443
New South Wales	38,484	155,013	32,993	142,509	12,244	39,754	11,368	36,427
Victoria	18,191	80,954	16,429	75,352	5,631	18,049	5,214	15,953
Queensland	1,482	2,989	1,529	3,016	1,239	3,684	1,433	4,050
South Australia	919	2,578	915	2,917	807	2,578	699	2,313
Tasmania	459	1,231	380	1,086	703	2,001	650	1,758
Western Australia	732	2,059	540	1,527	846	2,269	779	2,144
Union of South Africa	1,089	2,368	1,088	2,301	566	2,050	522	1,589
Egypt	307	2,051	294	1,982	72	439	64	336
Aden	1,487	10,714	1,530	11,060	..	..	..	..
India	4,591	34,350	4,558	35,529	1,121	6,537	1,148	6,072
Ceylon	505	2,315	596	2,650	135	435	118	441
Straits Settlements	689	1,941	661	2,036	466	2,159	441	1,971
Hong Kong	2,170	16,723	1,836	12,727	614	3,166	689	3,542
Fiji	954	2,071	977	2,142	2,241	7,248	2,149	7,603
Tonga	79	288	108	395	1,486	7,801	1,408	7,455
Tahiti	183	1,549	226	2,016	242	1,521	236	1,345
Norfolk Island	65	157	61	152	639	2,092	605	1,848
Uruguay .. .. .	..	..	..	..	68	311	36	197
Others .. .. .	..	..	..	..	9	30	23	90
Totals	361,251	2,703,602	278,382	2,065,124	63,649	258,384	57,276	225,456

Table No. 6.

TABLE SHOWING THE NUMBER OF FORWARDED, AND THE REVENUE DERIVED FROM, PAID TELEGRAMS AND TOLL CALLS (INCLUDING CABLE AND RADIO MESSAGES AND OVERSEAS TOLL CALLS) DURING THE YEARS ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1931 AND 1930.

Year ended	Telegrams.										Toll Communications.		Total.	
	Ordinary.		Urgent.		Press.		Letter.		Urgent Marine.		Number.	Value.	Number.	Value.
	Number.	Value.	Number.	Value.	Number.	Value.	Number.	Value.	Number.	Value.				
31st March, 1931	5,286,912	£ 442,846	186,585	£ 17,895	561,166	£ 77,345	351,782	£ 16,090	37,018*	10,798,999	£ 466,995	17,222,462	£ 1,021,171†	
31st March, 1930	5,694,886	£ 491,423	219,314	£ 21,524	580,867	£ 80,528	404,444	£ 18,048	43,418*	11,404,175	£ 482,571	18,347,104	£ 1,094,094‡	

* No payment received.
cable and radio messages.

† Deduct £177,187 paid to other Administrations in respect of cable and radio messages.

‡ Deduct £205,919 paid to other Administrations in respect of

Table No. 7.

TABLE SHOWING CABLE, RADIO-TELEGRAPH, AND RADIO-TELEPHONE BUSINESS TRANSACTED DURING THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1931, AS COMPARED WITH THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1930.

Cable Messages.

Year ended	INTERNATIONAL.				AUSTRALIAN.				Total.	
	Forwarded.		Received.		Forwarded.		Received.		Number of Messages.	Revenue earned by New Zealand.
	Number of Messages.	Revenue earned by New Zealand.	Number of Messages.	Revenue earned by New Zealand.	Number of Messages.	Revenue earned by New Zealand.	Number of Messages.	Revenue earned by New Zealand.		
31st March, 1931 ..	180,070	£ 9,411	160,562	£ 7,824	142,457	£ 4,185	136,125	£ 4,232	619,214	£ 25,652
31st March, 1930 ..	195,468	10,288	167,028	8,115	154,675	4,567	149,658	4,638	666,829	27,608
PRESS MESSAGES (included in above totals).										
31st March, 1931 ..	3,542	385	4,714	410	4,683	477	5,532	666	18,471	1,938
31st March, 1930 ..	3,117	275	4,065	378	5,189	519	5,563	709	17,934	1,881

Radio-telegrams.

Year ended	Forwarded.		Received.		Total.	
	Number of Messages.	Revenue earned by New Zealand.	Number of Messages.	Revenue earned by New Zealand.	Number of Messages.	Revenue earned by New Zealand.
31st March, 1931	£ 12,959	23,130	£ 4,331	36,089	£ 7,020
31st March, 1930	13,921	24,282	4,526	38,203	7,458

Radio-telephone Calls.

(Service inaugurated 25th November, 1930.)

Outward.		Inward.		Total.	
Number of Calls.	Revenue earned by New Zealand.	Number of Calls.	Revenue earned by New Zealand.	Number of Calls.	Revenue earned by New Zealand.
59	£ 87	117	£ 260	176	£ 347

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (1,190 copies), £62 10s.

By Authority: W. A. G. SKINNER, Government Printer, Wellington.—1931.

Price 1s.]

