

This has been the experience in New Zealand. While the present system has on rare occasions been fraudulently abused, those who adversely criticize the practice now in operation have not as yet proposed anything in its place which would not only provide an immunity from fraud, but which would not involve an expenditure on clerical labour exceeding the present infinitesimal losses by fraud. It is also to be borne in mind that a perfect system of banking has yet to be discovered, and that in all such operations a small percentage of fraud is to be anticipated. The Department has not been slow to adopt any successful or practical innovation, or to initiate improvements or changes. In the matter of depositors' signatures it has not yet discovered a better method than that in use, but the question is receiving earnest consideration.

WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY

During last session of Parliament an Act was passed giving the Governor the right to establish stations for the purpose of receiving and transmitting telegraph messages within New Zealand, or between New Zealand and parts beyond New Zealand, by wireless telegraphy, and preventing any person erecting, constructing, or establishing any station or plant for the purpose of receiving or transmitting communications by wireless telegraphy without having first obtained the consent of the Governor in Council.

No progress has been made in the direction of introducing wireless telegraphy into this colony, negotiations which were commenced with the Marconi Company having fallen through. Inquiries are now being made as to the desirability of testing another system, but advancement in the direction of making wireless telegraphy a commercial success appears to be slow.

An international conference on wireless telegraphy was held at Berlin last year, at which Great Britain and other countries were represented. The results were somewhat inconclusive, as the British and Italian delegations were unable to support the proposals in their entirety. Good progress, however, appears to have been made towards fixing a basis on which a future congress would deliberate.

BUILDINGS.

The alterations to the Chief Post-office, Dunedin, have been completed with very satisfactory results, the accommodation being now all that could be desired. The proposed alterations at Christchurch, which provide much needed additional accommodation for postal and telegraph business, are on a similar scale to those at Dunedin, and are about to be put in hand. At Timaru considerable alterations have been completed to provide better conveniences both for the public and the Post and Telegraph business. The clock-tower at Oamaru has been erected, and the clock placed in position. The office is now undergoing general renovation. At Wellington it has been necessary to occupy a large portion of the old buildings recently purchased for future additions to the General Post Office, as it has been found impossible to satisfactorily carry on the work of the several branches in the main building. A site for a new office at Nelson has been presented to the Department.

During the year new brick buildings were completed and occupied at Carterton, Hunterville, Levin, Port Ahuriri, and Woodville, and at Eltham and Kaiapoi similar buildings are approaching completion. The policy of erecting substantial and commodious brick buildings in the more important towns which have assumed a permanent character is being steadily pursued, but the residents elsewhere clamour for new buildings before the time has arrived for condemning those of lesser pretensions which happen to be in existence and are still equal to requirements. New wooden buildings have been completed and occupied at Kaponga, Urenui, Norsewood, Paparoa, Raetihi, Dargaville, and Te Puke, and others are about to be proceeded with.

Plans have been prepared for new brick post and telegraph offices at Greymouth, Tauranga, Winton, Nelson, and Palmerston North, and new offices or enlargements are being considered for several other places.

The following general repairs, additions, &c., were carried out during the year: Supply and erection of public clock, Ashburton; completion of extensive alterations, &c., also erection of fumigating-shed, Auckland; purchase of properties adjoining Post-office, Christchurch; residence for Postmaster, Clyde; erection of cottage, Pacific Cable Station, Doubtless Bay (for Pacific Cable Board); additions, &c., Fortrose; subsidy paid, and public clock erected, Gisborne; telephone-office, Glenorchy; renovations and drainage, Hawera; repairs and renovations, Hokitika; additions, &c., Lawrence; alterations, Martinborough; land acquired for site, Otaki; removal and re-erection, Pahi; land acquired for site, Parnell; additions and renovations, Raglan; additions and renovations, Rawene; repairs, &c., to lineman's quarters, Rolleston; additions, &c., Ross; additions, drainage, &c., Stratford; renovations, &c., Waimate; repairs, &c., put in hand, Waka-puaka; fencing, &c., Weber; alterations to Telephone Exchange, and additions to Departmental Store completed, Wellington.