

The Veterinarian, Mr. Crabb, deals now entirely with the inspection, handling, and sale of New Zealand meat arriving in this country, and with the export of live-stock from this country to the Dominion, and reports fully on such subjects to the Dominion.

The Dairy-produce Inspector, Mr. Wright, deals now with the inspection, condition, handling, and sale of dairy-produce arriving in this country from New Zealand and fully reporting thereon to New Zealand.

The Military Adviser and Inspector, Colonel A. W. Robin, C.B., C.M.G., reports upon, advises, and when necessary carries out inspection of warlike stores and cadet equipment required by the Defence and Education Departments.

In addition, the following technical advisers, who are paid by commission, are attached to the Department, viz.: Messrs. Carruthers and Elliot act as consulting and inspecting engineers as regards railway, public-works, and other stores and material; Messrs. Preece, Cardew, and Snell act as consulting and inspecting engineers in respect to telephone and telegraph material; Mr. Sandle acts as adviser and inspector for stationery, stamp-paper, &c.; Messrs. D. and C. Stevenson act as marine engineers for lighthouses and similar materials.

FINANCIAL.

The heaviest and most exacting work is that of finance; but, as these transactions are mostly confidential, I am embodying them in a separate letter by this mail.

This branch of the work involves the keeping of accounts and conducting of transactions with the Bank of England, the Bank of New Zealand, the Crown Agents for the Colonies, Messrs. J. and A. Scrimgeour, and the Inland Revenue Department. In addition, the business appertaining to the Loan and Stock Agents, involving the raising of loans, conversion operations, inscription of stock, and issue of debentures, is carried out by the Department, besides that of the trustees of the sinking fund of loan of 1863. The custody of public securities in this country and work in connection therewith is also dealt with by this Department.

GENERAL AND COMMERCIAL.

Attached hereto are appendices containing statistical particulars which in themselves give an indication of the extent and variety of the business transacted by the Department.

The total number of letters received and despatched during 1912 amounted to 167,014 (being a daily average of 534).

The number of Government despatches received from and sent to the Dominion amounted in 1912 to 9,857. The number of rail and book packets despatched during 1912 amounted to 4,678. The number of cablegrams received from and sent to the Dominion in 1912 on public business was 1,189.

Publications relating to the Dominion, amounting to a total of 525,123 (as per attached list) have been circulated during the past year.

INDENTS.

The number of orders of all descriptions received from the various Government Departments during 1912 was 589, involving the placing of 807 separate contracts. In addition to these there were 458 standing orders, principally for publications, as compared with 192 in 1902. The value of many of these indents is very considerable, and their placing and execution requires great care and experience, involving in every case where practicable the invitation of as many competitive quotations as possible.

In addition, a great quantity of bridge material, for which the contracts are let in New Zealand, is supplied from and inspected in this country. In 1912 this amounted to 1,218 tons of material of all descriptions, the checking and passing of which considerably increases the work of the office.

SHIPMENTS.

During the year 1,612 separate shipments were made, comprising 23,482 tons dead-weight, representing 140,150 bundles, pieces, casks, or cases, and 30,500 packages of measurement goods, besides a quantity of live partridges. The outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in this country during 1912 stopped all shipments of live-stock ordered through this Department.

MARINE INSURANCE.

Marine insurance policies were taken out on various goods and material, representing an amount of £698,125.

PENSIONS.

The number of pensions paid through the Department has grown considerably, and last year £4,109 was so expended.

PUBLIC TRUST OFFICE.

The number of payments made on account of intestate and trust estates dealt with by this office during 1912 on behalf of the Public Trustee was 599, and the amount disbursed on account thereof was £41,665.

I have referred in the separate Financial Report to the number and value of the deposits by insurance companies under the Foreign Insurance Companies' Deposits Act, 1908, and held here on behalf of the Public Trustee.