

There seems no reason why the sale of such Government bonds should not be made permanent in order that all classes of the community may at any time be able to readily invest their savings and any trust funds in State-guaranteed securities.

PATRIOTIC FUNDS.

The Department continues to render assistance to the organizers of the various patriotic and relief funds by the granting of special concessions.

POST OFFICE.

During 1916 Inspectors of Post-offices visited 1,469 offices, and 521 non-permanent offices were inspected by permanent Postmasters in their vicinity.

Thirty-seven post-offices were established and 60 closed. The number of post-offices open on the 31st December, 1916, was 2,379. The names of 7 offices were changed to meet local circumstances.

The number of articles delivered in the Dominion, including those received from places beyond during the year 1916, as compared with the number in 1915, was as under:—

	1916.	1915.	Increase.	Decrease.
Letters and letter-cards ..	121,609,306	119,542,410	2,066,896	..
Post-cards	4,602,910	5,078,723	..	475,813
Other articles	46,456,046	48,528,376	..	2,072,330
Totals	172,668,262	173,149,509	..	..
Parcels	2,981,392	2,886,039	95,353	..

The letters and letter-cards increased 1·72 per cent., post-cards decreased 9·36 per cent., other articles decreased 4·27 per cent., and parcels increased 3·30 per cent.

In 1915 letters and letter-cards increased 0·61 per cent., post-cards decreased 10·05 per cent., other articles decreased 12·55 per cent., and parcels increased 11·61 per cent.

The average number of letters and letter-cards posted by unit of population during 1916 was estimated at 109·54. The average in 1915 was 111·53.

The declared value of parcels received from places outside the Dominion in 1916 was £668,377, as against £444,648 in 1915. The Customs duty amounted to £107,410 15s. 1d.

The declared value of parcels despatched to places beyond the Dominion in 1916 was £39,133, as against £35,674 in 1915.

A conference of inspecting officers was held at Wellington in December, 1916, which resulted in the adoption of improved methods for overtaking post-office inspection throughout the Dominion.

By Order in Council of the 10th July, 1916, it was provided that any packet found to contain commercial papers or printed papers from two or more persons or firms should be surcharged with double the difference between the postage payable if the matter relating to each person or firm had been posted separately, and the amount of postage affixed to the packet.

The public was notified in June, 1916, that packets containing newspapers or other printed matter of any kind (except trade circulars) could be forwarded to neutral countries only by publishers or news agents specially authorized.

On the 1st November, 1916, a travelling post-office was established on the Masterton-Waingawa-Matahiwi rural-delivery route.

In order to conserve the supply of paper, the September, 1916, issue of the Post and Telegraph Guide was not printed.

Owing to the shortness of staff caused by the exigencies of the war the Department was compelled, as from the 1st April, 1917, to insist on persons whose residences lie back from a street providing a letter-box on the street-line for the reception of mail-matter. Failure to comply with this requirement results in the addressee having to call at the post-office for his correspondence. Similarly, from the 1st June, 1917, letters for holders of private boxes will not be delivered into the private boxes unless the number of the box is included in the address.

PROHIBITED CORRESPONDENCE.

The correspondence of 7 persons or firms was prohibited transmission, under section 28 of the Post and Telegraph Act, 1908. Letters addressed to prohibited persons or firms withheld from delivery during the year numbered 600. Prohibition was withdrawn in the case of 1 person.

Under the authority of the regulations made under the War Regulations Act, 1914, postal packets were prohibited transmission to 44 persons or firms. Telegrams may not be transmitted to or money-orders issued in favour of such persons or firms.

NEWSPAPERS.

Twenty-seven newspapers were registered for transmission by post, and 9 were removed from the register. Forty-two magazines were registered.

AUTOMATIC STAMP-VENDING MACHINES.

Automatic stamp-vending machines are in use throughout the Dominion. They have proved a great convenience to the public, and have relieved the counter officers to a great extent.

Post-card-vending machines are installed at a number of offices and a letter-card-vending machine at Wellington.