

Serious floods in Hawke's Bay in June, 1917, caused considerable damage to roads and railways, and in consequence a number of mail-services were temporarily suspended. On the 12th of the month, owing to a washout near Napier, mail communication between Wellington and Napier was interrupted.

Owing to heavy floods the mail-services Kaikoura-Waiatu and Kaikoura-Parnassus were suspended from the 13th to the 18th September, 1917.

In January, 1918, the coach running between Otarehua and Cambrian was wrecked. One bag of mail from St. Bathans was lost.

The s.s. "Himitangi," which had carried the mails between New Zealand and the Chatham Islands for a number of years, was wrecked at Chatham Islands on the 29th July, 1918. Of the mails carried on the trip, those for Waitangi had been landed, but those for Kaingaroa, Owenga, and Pitt Island were lost.

BUILDINGS.

New buildings were opened at the following places: Aria, Heretaunga, Horotiu, Piopio, Tauherenikau Military Camp, Te Karaka, Turua.

The departmental buildings at Lumsden were destroyed by fire. All contents were saved.

MONEY-ORDERS.

The money-order business for the year shows a decrease in the number of transactions and in the total of the amount remitted.

Thirteen money-order offices were opened and 8 closed, leaving 809 offices open at the close of the year.

The money-orders issued numbered 642,683, for a total of £3,476,645; those paid 550,921, for £3,130,574.

The business with countries outside New Zealand also shows a decrease, the total amount sent abroad being £498,648, and the amount received from abroad £168,710.

The total commission received for the transaction of money-order business amounted to £16,077.

POSTAL NOTES.

The postal-note business shows a slight decrease; 2,166,597 postal notes, for £638,246, were issued, and 2,150,613 were paid. On this business the commission of £9,326 was received.

Twenty-one offices were opened and 13 closed, leaving 1,024 postal-note offices in operation at the end of the year.

BRITISH POSTAL ORDERS.

The number of British postal orders sold was 93,058, as compared with 108,612 for the previous year. The amount sent away by means of this very useful form of remittance was £55,489. The twenty-shilling and ten-shilling notes still continue to have the greatest sales.

SAVINGS-BANK.

The business of the Post Office Savings-bank again shows a remarkable increase in the excess of deposits over withdrawals. It amounted to no less than £2,645,360; and, in addition to this, there was credited to depositors' accounts an amount of £947,821 for interest. Thus the total amount at credit of depositors was increased during the year by £3,593,181. The total balance at credit of depositors on the 31st December, 1917, was £29,196,389. These results are an indication of the unabated confidence reposed in the institution by the people of the Dominion.

There were 13 new savings-bank offices opened during the year and 8 closed, leaving a total of 791 offices open.

82,200 new accounts were opened and 53,921 closed, leaving 566,351 still in operation at the end of the year. This gives a proportion of one account in every 2.03 of the population.

Full particulars as to the numbers of deposits and withdrawals will be found in the tables. The total transactions show a material increase. The deposits reached a total of £17,106,529, and the withdrawals £14,461,169. The average deposit amounted to £14 2s. 3d., and the average withdrawal to £20 2s. 4d., while the average amount at credit of each depositor was £51 11s. If the total at credit were divided equally among the whole of the people, the amount at credit of each person would be £25 8s. 10d.

Fixed deposits, if part of a war fund within the War Funds Act, 1915, and exceeding £50 in amount, are accepted for a period of five years at 4 per cent. per annum.

The working-expenses of the Savings-bank amounted to 3.97d. per transaction, which gives a cost per cent. on the total amount at credit of depositors of 0.11 per £100.

The system of nomination by depositors in favour of relatives who receive moneys at their credit in case of death is steadily growing in favour. During the year 301 nominations were made.

The system of transfer of accounts between the Dominion and the United Kingdom resulted in £12,551 being transferred to the United Kingdom and £3,251 to New Zealand. A similar arrangement with the Australian Savings-banks resulted in £26,286 being transferred to Australia and £31,810 to New Zealand.

WORK PERFORMED FOR OTHER DEPARTMENTS.

The scope of the Department's usefulness to the State is constantly being widened, and there are very few services under State control for which the Post Office is not in some measure the agent dealing directly with the public.