

roading, &c. At other settlements material for private lines can be obtained on a deferred-payment system at cost price, and where communication with the outside world by public telephone-lines is needed the claims of soldier settlers are given special consideration.

The Chief Telegraph Engineer is now *en route* to the United Kingdom and the United States of America to investigate telegraph and telephone developments, which have made phenomenal strides during recent years. He is taking with him all necessary data in connection with Cook Straits with a view to looking carefully into the question of the manufacture of a suitable submarine cable which will serve to connect both Islands telephonically. The Murray multiplex telegraph apparatus, to facilitate telegraph communication between Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin, was delayed during the war period, but is now nearing completion. By means of this apparatus eight simultaneous messages can be sent over a single telegraph-wire. These messages are merely typed at the transmitting end and are received in page form at the receiving end on an automatic typewriter all ready for distribution.

It is expected at an early date to establish trial aerial mail-services, which will be developed as facilities for the landing, housing, and repairing of machines are completed. Several experiments have already been carried out from Auckland with sufficient success to warrant the Department embarking on a more elaborate scheme.

The use of motor vehicles for the expeditious transport of mails has proved an unqualified success. It is intended to extend the use of motor vehicles as soon as cars are available, and the Department will then be able to handle more expeditiously mails between its offices and the points of departure of trains and steamers. In addition, it is proposed to extend the rural mail system of delivery by car. The Secretary will make special investigation into this matter whilst in Canada. In this connection the Department has established motor-repair shops, and in Wellington has undertaken the repair of all cars owned by the Government. The work in these shops is done expeditiously and well.

The experiment of the Government in introducing the Post and Telegraph Department Act, 1918, which provided for the promotion of officers by merit alone, has proved an unqualified success. It has now been in force for over a year, and officers have realized that special efforts put forward by them to increase their efficiency, and thereby the efficiency of the Department, bring a reward in the shape of promotion.

STAMP DUTIES DEPARTMENT.

The revenue collected by the Stamp Duties Department during the year 1919-20 amounted to £3,344,933, or £1,220,161 in excess of the collections for the previous financial year.

The amounts collected by way of totalizator-tax, bank-note tax, and amusements-tax are shown hereunder :—

TOTALIZATOR-TAX.					£
1919-20	....	....	....	....	413,653
1918-19	....	....	....	....	229,273
	Increase	....	....	....	<u>£184,380</u>
BANK-NOTE TAX.					
1919-20	....	....	....	....	212,626
1918-19	....	....	....	....	188,003
	Increase	....	....	....	<u>£24,623</u>
AMUSEMENTS-TAX.					
1919-20	....	....	....	....	68,326
1918-19	....	....	....	....	40,290
	Increase	....	....	....	<u>£28,036</u>