

CENSUS.

As in 1916, postal officers distributed and collected the schedules for the census of population taken on the 17th April, 1921. They also obtained at the same time borough agricultural and pastoral returns, and a return of the public libraries and of meeting-places of religious denominations and attendances at their services.

AMALGAMATION OF GREYMOUTH, HOKITIKA, AND WESTPORT POSTAL DISTRICTS.

When postal districts were established the main factor considered was the isolation of the town and district from other centres; and consequently, for convenience in administration, three districts were established on the west coast of the South Island—viz., Westport, Greymouth, and Hokitika—with the towns of those names as the chief offices. But conditions on the west coast, particularly in regard to transit, have changed to such an extent that the three districts, with the exception of certain offices in the Westport District, can now be efficiently administered from Greymouth. Consequently it has been arranged for the Hokitika District and the greater part of the Westport District to be combined with the Greymouth District from the 1st January, 1922. Seventeen offices in the Westport District have been transferred to the Nelson District, their means of communication being better with Nelson than with Greymouth. To enable withdrawals from local savings-bank accounts to continue to be made on demand at Hokitika and Westport, savings-bank ledgers are kept at those offices. The amalgamation has effected considerable economy.

TRANSFER OF CERTAIN OFFICES FROM HAMILTON TO AUCKLAND POSTAL DISTRICT.

The northern boundary of the Hamilton Postal District has been altered so as to exclude from that district Onewhero, Port Waikato, Pukekawa, and Te Hirua, it being found that it would be of advantage for the four offices named to be retransferred to the Auckland District.

NAMING OF NEW POST OR TELEPHONE OFFICE.

The place-name, whether Maori or not, is now adopted for a new post or telephone office if it is not the same as or does not too closely resemble the name of an existing office. Previously a Maori name was insisted on.

WAR-LOAN CERTIFICATES.

War-loan certificates commenced to fall due on the 11th August, 1921, and holders are being offered an investment in $5\frac{1}{2}$ -per-cent. Government bonds or inscribed stock. Those whose holdings are not sufficient in amount to enable such an investment to be made may invest in Post Office investment certificates at $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. compound interest, or place the proceeds of matured certificates in the Post Office Savings-bank on current account.

POST OFFICE INVESTMENT CERTIFICATES.

The necessity for raising further sums of money to prosecute the war having ceased, it was decided to inaugurate a new system of certificates as from the 1st November, 1920. These certificates are called Post Office investment certificates, and are issued on exactly the same lines as were the war-loan certificates, bearing interest, however, at $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and it is anticipated that they will form a regular channel whereby the public can invest moneys from 11s. 9d. upwards for a period of from five to ten years with State security for the capital invested. Up to the 31st March, 1922, the amount so invested has reached the sum of £229,672 19s. 3d.

STORES BRANCH.

The following figures show the values of supplies purchased, issued, and remaining in stock for the year ended 31st March, 1922, while those for the previous year are stated for the purpose of comparison:—

	1921.	1922.
	£	£
Stock on hand, 31st March	257,376	384,717
Purchases	319,347	682,692
Issues	263,537	555,351

Supplies from overseas have come in very freely during the year, many orders of long standing being filled.

The total inward consignments for the year 1921, as compared with 1920, were,—

	Shipments.	Packages.
1921	1,037	83,687
1920	585	36,508

The number of indents placed has shown a marked reduction, the figures being—1921, 177; 1920, 368. This is due to the policy followed of restricting purchases on a falling market, buying being postponed as far as prudence permits.

Competition for the Department's business is now keener than has been the case for several years, and there is every indication of a rapid return to normal conditions, and a consequent fall in prices.

Supplies of uniforms are now more readily available than at any time since pre-war years, but the deliveries from makers are showing delays.

The difficulties which existed in keeping up supplies of parcel-post hampers have also disappeared, as a result of the easing of the pressure of private orders on basket-manufacturers.