

For many years motor-cycles have been used by linemen for travelling along telegraph routes when locating "faults"; but experience has proved that the motor-cycle is not economical for such work. For that reason a small four-wheeled conveyance has been designed, which serves the dual purpose of conveying a lineman and supplies for the repairing of faults. In future, motor-cycles with side-cars will not be used by the Department; and it is interesting to know that the Bell Telephone Company of America has reached a similar decision. Motor-cycles now in use are being gradually replaced as they wear out; but no more will be purchased for the above class of work.

BUILDINGS.

The development of the Dominion is indicated in the continual call for more post-offices to be placed under the control of permanent officers. In order to cope with this need a progressive building policy has to be maintained, especially as the war period, during which few buildings were erected, has left the Department somewhat behind in its building programme. So far, however, as funds permit, buildings are being erected, the practice at present being to erect offices strictly in the order of importance, either as newly-created permanent offices or as new buildings to replace old buildings which are not now suitable for post-office purposes. There are so many post-office buildings which are practically collections of old timber, and so many which are inadequate for the daily business, that the public, knowing the condition of the local office only, clamour for the erection of new buildings. The condition of each post-office building is well known; and, while it is admitted that very many should be replaced, funds for such a huge undertaking are not available at once. If conditions in New Zealand continue to improve as they have done during the past year or so, it is not unreasonable to anticipate that all the urgently necessary buildings will be erected within the next five years.

While the internal arrangement of a post-office is not of much interest to the public as a whole, it is worth recording that during the past year there has been a great improvement in design. New offices have been erected at Dannevirke and Stratford to a most up-to-date design, which will permit of the addition of any accommodation that may be required in later years without in any way affecting the internal design. These buildings are solidly built; they are practically fireproof, and are so arranged that a maximum of natural lighting is available. They are heated throughout by hot-water radiators connected with a boiler in the basement; and a feature is the presence in each building of only one fireplace, which will be used to provide heat in the telephone exchange at night when the boiler will not be in use. These two buildings are expected to meet the increasing business for at least ten years without additions.

TELEGRAPH PRESS RATES.

From the 1st May, 1923, the limit of 600 words which morning newspapers were permitted to receive at Press rates between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. at or from offices not reopening in the evening was abolished.

The rates charged by the Department for Press telegrams are particularly low; and, as it has frequently been stated that no reduction in the charges on this class of traffic was made when the reduction to penny postage was instituted, it is necessary to point out that Press telegrams are to-day handled at a figure considerably below the cost of the service rendered. While I do not express the opinion that the charges should meet the actual cost of the service, I find it necessary to remark that the Department is regarded as one which works on the strictly commercial basis of providing interest on the capital expended and a full depreciation on its assets. It necessarily follows that any service given by the Department should bring in its full recompense, and that any service rendered below cost or free of charge has to be made up by another branch of the Department.

DAILY LETTER-TELEGRAMS.

A new class of cable message, known as "daily letter-telegrams," has been introduced. At present such telegrams are exchanged only with the United Kingdom and Canada. The rate to the United Kingdom is 8d. per word, with a minimum charge of 13s. 4d.; and to Canada, 6d. per word, with a minimum charge of 10s. The regulations governing deferred cable messages are applicable