

The general maintenance of police-stations had been suspended in some degree during the war period and for some time thereafter, so that a considerable leeway faced the Department so far as ordinary maintenance of police-stations was concerned. A substantial effort was made during last year to have these arrears of work attended to, and a considerable programme was carried out, including the following places: Russell, Cambridge, Eilerslie, Frankton, Hamilton, Huntly, Kihikihi, Morrinsville, Ngaruawahia, Otorohanga, Paeroa, Te Aroha, Te Awamutu, Waihi, Warkworth, Whitianga, Taneatua, Tauranga, Opotiki, Katikati, Ruatorea, Tolaga Bay, Motu, Rangaroa, Stratford, Normanby, New Plymouth, Waitara, Fitzroy, Eltham, Hawera, Kaponga, Aramoho, Hunterville, Marton, Taihape, Ohakune, Raetihi, Patea, Moawhango, Wanganui, Napier (Carlyle Street), Woodville, Porangahau, Palmerston North, Nelson, Motueka, Richmond, Takaka, Oxford, St. Andrews, Coalgate, Geraldine, Ashburton, Rakaia, Fairlie, Methven, Belfast, Christchurch, Lyttelton, Caversham, Cromwell, Duntroon, Kurow, Lawrence, Milton, Mosgiel, Palmerston, Pembroke, Portobello, Ranfurly, Roxburgh, South Dunedin, and Waitahuna.

POST AND TELEGRAPH BUILDINGS.

The rapid expansion of the Department's business continually demands the provision of increased or improved accommodation for the conduct of such business. The maintenance of a progressive building policy is therefore necessary. The requirements are many and varied, but each case is dealt with strictly in its order of urgency.

As an indication of the rapid growth of the Department's business I quote the case of Ngatea, situated on the Hauraki Plains, most of which was a swamp some years ago. In 1912, when a post-office was first established at Ngatea, the business was conducted in a small building situated on the property of one of the settlers, who acted as Postmaster. In 1919 a permanent Postmaster was appointed, and in 1922 a small departmental building, costing £325, was erected. The increase in the volume of business was so marked that within a comparatively short period the accommodation provided was found to be inadequate, and during the latter part of 1924 the erection was commenced of an up-to-date country post-office building, with accommodation for a telephone exchange and residential quarters for the Postmaster, together with storage and garage accommodation, at a cost of £2,750.

During the year arrangements were made for the erection of post-office buildings at each of the following places: Flat Creek, Hyde, Middlemarch, Motueka, Mokauti, Motu, Ngatea, Ohingaiti, Orari, Pokeno, Pongaroa, Puke-miro, St. Andrews, St. Heliers, Silverdale, Springburn, Tarras, Te Uku, Waikino, Wellington (automatic-telephone exchange).

A building which is destined to become the central telephone exchange has been erected in Wellington. In addition to accommodating the switching-apparatus required for the ultimate conversion to automatic working of the whole of the public telephone service in Wellington, offices are provided in the new building for the District Telegraph Engineer and his staff, who are responsible for the city's telephone service.

Additions were made to the post-office buildings at Christchurch, Horopito, Kaikohe, and Te Aroha. At Whakatane additional accommodation for the post-office was obtained by taking that portion of the post-office building previously in occupation by the Postmaster as residential quarters.

Additions were made to the railway-station buildings at Kohuratahi and Tahora to provide accommodation for the post-office.

At Greymouth and Napier combined workshop and garage buildings were erected during the year. Garages were provided at Cambridge and Gore. At Sheffield arrangements were made to lease a building and to adapt it for use as a post-office.

The Department's business at Albury, which had previously been conducted at the railway-station, was during the year transferred to a building the property of the Department, and which had been secured some years previously in anticipation of requirements.

At Ashburton the Department secured the freehold of a property previously leased for the purposes of a garage and store.