

MONEY-ORDERS.

The money-order system still provides one of the foremost means of remitting amounts, large or small. The orders issued exceeded those issued in the previous year by 26,500 in number and £56,000 in value.

An arrangement was made during the year under which amounts for payment at places in Europe to which money-orders from New Zealand are sent through the intermediary of the London Post-office can be telegraphed to London and posted thence to destination. This should prove a useful means of making urgent remittances.

SAVINGS-BANK.

Despite the fact that the withdrawals exceeded the deposits, it is gratifying to report that the excess of withdrawals was less by £75,639 than the excess for the previous year. An increase of 25,672 in the number of accounts open on the 31st March, 1927, compared with the number open on the 31st March, 1926, evidences the continued popularity of the Post Office Savings-bank, and the desire for thrift of the people of the Dominion. The number of depositors on the 31st March was 783,827, and the total amount at their credit £48,985,502.

OVERSEAS MAILS.

The Vancouver and San Francisco mail-contract steamers continued to run with regularity, and mails between New Zealand and Great Britain were despatched and received with the customary expedition. On two occasions, owing to particularly good connections being made, the time occupied in transmission between New Zealand and London via San Francisco was only twenty-seven days.

MARINE POST-OFFICE.

The marine post-offices on the mail-steamers "Aorangi," "Niagara," "Makura," and "Tahiti," which voyage between New Zealand and Vancouver, and between New Zealand and San Francisco, continued to effect savings in time (from twelve to twenty-four hours) in the delivery of correspondence from overseas. The operation of the marine post-offices also enables outward correspondence to be posted up to a late hour and still to connect with the steamers.

INLAND MAIL-SERVICES.

A second daily mail-service (letters only) was inaugurated between Napier and Gisborne, thus affording the latter town means of postal communication more in keeping with its importance.

An innovation was the undertaking by my Department of the work of delivering and collecting railway parcels in Wellington. The work had previously been done by a private contractor.

RURAL DELIVERIES.

The policy of my Department in respect of rural-mail deliveries has been more than justified. These services are popular with the farmer, and numerous requests have been received for additional deliveries. Occasionally, owing to the sparsely settled nature of a district, to a lack of good roads, or to some other disability, it has not been possible to grant an application for rural-delivery facilities. Whenever practicable, however, such requests are agreed to even in cases in which it is known that the granting of the delivery will involve a loss for the Department. It is claimed that in the more closely settled rural areas postal facilities at least equal to those of the smaller towns have been provided. While it is not always possible to arrange the frequency desired, my Department is invariably prepared to improve the conditions of the remote settler by providing him with reasonable postal facilities. It is recognized that the time that would be taken by a farmer in journeying to and from the nearest post-office can be more profitably employed on his farm. With rural deliveries the time of the farmer is saved, and this more than compensates him for the annual expenditure of £1 or 10s. in the rural-delivery fee. The fee varies according to the frequency of the delivery. As a result of the extension of the rural-delivery system, many small country post-offices have been permanently closed. From a national viewpoint the rural-delivery system is economically sound.