

MISSING POSTAL PACKETS.

During 1926, 6,002 inquiries for postal packets reported missing were received. In 3,790 cases, or more than half the total number, the packets were traced. In 1,032 of these cases inquiry showed that the sender was responsible for the delay; in 1,251 cases the responsibility for the delay rested with the addressee; in 392 cases the delay was due to failures in the Post Office; and in 1,115 cases either there had been no delay or there had been delay but the responsibility for it could not be fixed. The cases in which it was not possible to trace the packets inquired for numbered 2,212. In this number are included postal packets misappropriated either inside or outside the Post Office and postal packets lost before posting or after delivery. In this connection it may be mentioned that in a large number of cases in which complaint is made regarding the non-delivery of postal packets the inquiries made by the Department result in the arrest and punishment either of the person who was entrusted with the posting of the packet or of the person whose duty it was to accept delivery on behalf of the addressee. The actual losses throughout the year amounted to .0009 per cent. of the total number of articles posted.

The importance of registering packets containing articles of value is continually being stressed. A warning notice is attached to each posting-box in the Dominion, and sometimes the matter is brought to the notice of persons concerned by means of pamphlets issued by the Department. Notwithstanding this, many persons still forward bank-notes and other readily negotiable value in unregistered letters.

POSTMARKING-MACHINES.

Use continued to be made of postmarking machines for advertising purposes.

One of the Wellington machines carried a slogan advertising New-Zealand-made goods. Another machine at Wellington and machines at the three other centres carried slogans advertising departmental facilities in the following fashion :—

Sell by Mail, Simple, Economical, Direct.	Pack carefully, Address fully, Post early.	Advertise by Post, $\frac{1}{2}$ d. for 2 oz.
Reach the Unseen Buyer, Sell by Mail.	Save Travelling-expenses. Sell by Mail.	Send a Letter-telegram, 27 words for 9d.

REGISTRATION OF MOTOR-VEHICLES.

Owing to the late delivery of registration-plates for the year 1926-27, motor-owners had only a comparatively short time in which to obtain new licenses. The task of relicensing proved a heavy strain on the staff at many offices, but, owing to the splendid spirit shown by the officers concerned, the work was carried out with a minimum of delay and inconvenience.

An innovation introduced in the plates for the year 1927-28 is a prefix letter on plates for commercial vehicles. This letter indicates the amount of the license fee paid. The police and Traffic Inspectors are thus enabled to detect any vehicle in respect of which the appropriate fee has not been paid.

The colour of registration-plates is changed each year. This is done in order to enable police and traffic inspectors to see at a glance whether the current fees payable under the Motor-vehicles Act have been paid.

As the issuance of licenses in a documentary form was an expensive undertaking, and the documents served no useful purpose, it was decided to discontinue the issue of documentary licenses from the 1st April, 1926, and to regard the registration-plates as the annual license.

During the past motor-registration year much difficulty was experienced in identifying vehicles owing to the failure of many owners, when registering their vehicles, to quote accurately the engine and chassis numbers. Each discrepancy that came under notice was investigated thoroughly. In a number of instances it was found that the discrepancies were due to owners transferring plates from a registered to an unregistered vehicle. In the majority of cases, however, it was found that at the time registration was effected "part" numbers had been quoted instead of the actual engine and chassis numbers.

Motor-vehicles registered in the Dominion up to and including the 31st March, 1927, were as follow :—

NORTH ISLAND.						
Cars	..	..	..	..	..	65,470
Trucks, &c.	..	..	..	..	..	15,774
Cycles	..	..	..	..	..	19,186
						100,430
SOUTH ISLAND.						
Cars	..	..	..	..	..	40,443
Trucks, &c.	..	..	..	..	..	7,072
Cycles	..	..	..	..	..	14,396
						61,911
Total	..	..	..	..	..	162,341

These vehicles do not include those for which 3,250 demonstration-plates were issued to dealers.