

PURCHASES.

Five hundred and sixty-eight orders for material of a value of £290,039 0s. 9d. were placed overseas. In addition, orders were placed within the Dominion. The total value of stores purchased during the year was £464,164 9s. 3d.

Particulars of the purchases made for other Departments under the Stores Control Board Regulations are set out hereunder. The figures for the previous year are shown also :—

Year ended	Requisitions.	Items.	Value of items purchased.		Total.
			On Indent.	Locally.	
			£	£	£
31st March, 1928 ..	3,301	13,529	22,632	91,587	114,219
31st March, 1927 ..	3,263	13,854	18,095	92,981	111,076

GENERAL CONTRACTS.

Full advantage is taken of the contracts let by the Stores Control Board.

Tenders were invited by the Department and contracts were arranged through the Stores Control Board for the supply at very favourable prices of motor-spirit, kerosene, lubricating-oils, and motor-tires to meet the needs of Government Departments. Additional facilities have been provided for the storage of motor-spirit and lubricating-oils, and economy has resulted from the purchase of these items in bulk.

The purchase was arranged of ninety-five motor-vehicles for other Departments and of 130 motor-vehicles for the Post and Telegraph Department.

ORDERS FOR DOMINION PRODUCTS.

In considering tenders generally, full preference, as provided in the Customs tariff, has been given to goods manufactured in the Dominion, and as a result a number of orders have been placed within the Dominion, notwithstanding that such action involved a greater expenditure than would have been the case had the orders been placed overseas.

Wherever practicable the Department uses New Zealand timbers, and during the year £12,737 18s. 6d. was expended on silver-pine poles and £2,049 11s. 3d. on rata timber for telegraph arms. The majority of the poles were obtained from the west coast of the South Island.

An amount of £4,514 3s. 4d. was expended in the purchase of telegraph insulators of New Zealand manufacture.

SALE OF OBSOLETE AND UNSERVICEABLE MATERIAL.

Auctions of obsolete and unserviceable material, including worn-out motor-vehicles from various Departments, were held at Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin.

The total value of property sold on account of the Post and Telegraph Department was £20,606 11s. 6d. This sum includes the value of scrap lead, copper wire, and other metals sold by tender.

MARINE INSURANCE FUND.

The value of the stores from countries within the Empire and from the United States of America imported under cover of the Marine Insurance Fund was £169,373. It was necessary to make only minor claims on the fund in respect of stores ordered by the Post and Telegraph Department.

POST OFFICE.

ARTICLES DELIVERED.

The number of articles delivered in the Dominion, including those received from places overseas, during the year 1927, compared with the number in 1926, was as under :—

	1927.	1926.	Increase Per Cent.
Letters	150,112,575	149,881,324	0.15
Post-cards	4,815,581	4,557,568	5.66
Parcels	3,581,632	3,698,400	3.15*
All other articles	92,504,917	86,224,573	7.28
	251,014,705	244,361,865	* Decrease.

AVERAGE NUMBER OF LETTERS POSTED PER UNIT OF POPULATION.

1927, 107.21 1926, 109.95.

NUMBER OF POST-OFFICES IN DOMINION.

Offices opened during year, 7 ; offices closed during year, 51 ; offices remaining open on 31st December, 1927, 1,955.