

STAMP-VENDING MACHINES.

The popularity of the stamp-vending machines remains undiminished. The machines are a boon to the Department and the public alike. Additional machines continue to be installed from time to time as circumstances warrant, and during the year seven more were brought into use. To ensure continuity of supply, the machines are manufactured in the Department's own workshop in Wellington.

A letter-card-vending machine of departmental manufacture was brought into use at Wellington in replacement of a machine which had become worn out after many years of service.

INSURED-BOX SERVICE.

The operation of the insured-box service has now been extended to the service between New Zealand and Egypt. An insured box may contain articles of gold, silver, precious stones, jewellery, and other articles of like nature, which are prohibited transmission by the insured-letter service.

CUSTOMS PARCELS.

The following table shows the declared value of goods received by parcel-post from places abroad and the Customs duty thereon; also the declared value of goods despatched by parcel-post to places abroad. The figures for the years 1927 and 1926 are shown in each case:—

		1927.			1926.		
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Declared value of received parcels	..	1,491,441	0	0	1,633,765	0	0
Customs duty		331,277	8	5	351,299	10	0
Declared value of forwarded parcels	..	88,650	0	0	97,324	0	0

POSTAL NOTES.

The popularity of the method of remitting small sums to places within the Dominion by means of postal notes is ever increasing. Postal-note business again shows a decided increase, the sales for the year ended 31st March, 1928, being 3,614,217, of a total value of £1,015,213, an increase over the previous year of 284,579 in number and of £27,526 in value.

The commission totalled £23,844 11s., an increase of £1,427 7s. 2d. on that earned in the year 1926-27.

BRITISH POSTAL ORDERS.

The sale of British postal orders also shows a marked increase: 153,286 orders, of a value of £86,955 10s. 3d., were sold, as against 142,669 orders, of a value of £82,053, sold during the previous year. The number of orders paid was 33,360, of a value of £19,927, as against 33,610, of a value of £19,873, paid during the previous year.

SAVINGS-BANK LEDGER OFFICE AT GORE.

Arrangements were made from the 1st November, 1927, for deposits in the Post Office Savings-bank at Gore to be repaid without the depositor's being required under ordinary circumstances to furnish a written notice of withdrawal. Savings-bank withdrawals can now be made at Gore over the counter. Formerly, depositors had to wait until the warrants for payment had been returned from Invercargill before they could make a withdrawal.

POSTAL AGENCY AT PITCAIRN ISLAND.

A postal agency of New Zealand established at Pitcairn Island was opened for business on the 7th June, 1927. Prior to the establishment of the agency the islanders had but primitive postal facilities. Having no post-office or postage-stamps, they were in the habit of handing their mail matter, without postage, to the captains of passing steamers. In the case of steamers sailing for New Zealand the captains handed the mail-matter over to the post-office at the first New Zealand port, whence it was sent forward to destination without charge. Some countries, however, declined to admit such letters free, and the addressees were accordingly called upon to pay double postage. A post-office at Pitcairn Island was urgently needed, but it was a little difficult to decide by whom it should be set up. The island is under the jurisdiction of the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, and it was by arrangement with the High Commissioner that New Zealand established the postal agency. The Postmaster is Mr. R. E. Christian, Chief Magistrate of the island.

TELEGRAPH AND TOLL SERVICES.

PROGRESS.

Notable progress has been made in the development of telegraph, telephone, and wireless services throughout the world. The trans-Atlantic telephone service is operating successfully. The beam wireless-telegraph service between Great Britain and Canada commenced in 1926. A service was established in April, 1927, between Great Britain and Australia; in July, 1927, between Great Britain and South Africa; and in September, 1927, between Great Britain and India. A service between Canada and Australia will be provided in the near future and no doubt this service will be quite as successful as those already in operation.

So far as the Dominion is concerned the Department aims to keep abreast of advances in the science of communication. It is realized that the progress so far achieved has been attained by the patient efforts of enthusiastic scientists and experimenters throughout the world. The officers of the Department are encouraged to pursue assiduous research and study in all possible directions.

The accompanying graph shows the enormous growth that has taken place in telephone and toll business in the Dominion since the beginning of the century. It shows also how, despite the effect of the toll service, telegraph business has more than held its own with the growth in population. It will be realized that the slow rate of growth of the telegraph traffic compared with other classes of traffic is due not to a general falling-off in business or to a want of business methods in the service, but to the diversion to the toll lines of a large amount of traffic which, in the absence of a toll service, would be transmitted by telegraph.