

Sites.

A site for a post-office building was purchased at Grey Lynn, and sites for storage purposes at Invercargill and Palmerston North.

Additional land for the post-office site at Hastings was taken in March, 1928, under the Public Works Act. Agreement as to compensation has not yet been reached.

The purchase has been authorized of a post-office site at Birkenhead, and storage sites at Dannevirke and Gisborne.

A lease was entered into with the Railways Department for the use of an area of land at Newmarket, with buildings thereon. It is intended to use the buildings as workshops, &c.

In the report for the year 1924–25 reference was made to an exchange of real estate between the Government and the Auckland City Council, under which the transfer to the Council of the Auckland East (Shortland Street) Post-office building and site was proposed. Owing to difficulties which subsequently arose, and on which agreement has not been reached, the exchange has not yet been effected.

Miscellaneous.

The separate wooden public telephone-cabinets which had been in use for a number of years outside the chief post-office building, Auckland, were replaced by two sets of cabinets constructed of bronze.

At Dunedin excavation in connection with building operations on private land adjoining the automatic-telephone-exchange building made it imperative to strengthen the foundations of the exchange building. Underpinning in concrete down to floor-level of the adjacent excavation was found necessary.

At Kurow, Lincoln, Little River, Waikari, and Woodlands the postal business was separated from the railway business, separate accommodation for the post-office being provided in each case in the railway-station building. The cost of the necessary alterations to the railway-station premises was borne by the Post and Telegraph Department.

In December the railway-station premises at Kurow, in which the post-office was conducted, were destroyed by fire. Consideration is now being given to the question of erecting a separate post-office building. In the meantime the post-office is accommodated in temporary premises.

Extensive alterations were made to the accommodation occupied by the Savings-bank Branch of the Chief Post-office, Wellington, in order to relieve congestion in the public space and facilitate the transaction of business.

Improved strong-room accommodation was provided in the General Post Office building.

The net capital expenditure on Postal and Telegraph offices last year was £62,086.

MENTAL HOSPITALS.

Avondale: Extensive alterations and additions have been made to various buildings during the year, and renovations carried out as required.

Wolf Home: The buildings have been repainted and a washhouse erected.

Puhitahi: The following buildings, in wood and concrete, have been erected: Kitchen block, with dining-rooms, &c.; lavatories; dormitory for men's quarters; artisans' quarters; calf-pens and piggeries. In addition, brick and concrete stables, implement-shed, and boiler-house have been built. A temporary water-supply has been provided, with high stand and tanks and motor-pump. For the permanent supply a contract was let for carrying water from Patumahoe Springs; the reservoir, with necessary 6 in. and 8 in. pipe-lines, has been completed. Electric supply has been laid on from the Franklin Power Board's reticulation.

Tokanui: Artisans' quarters in wood have been completed during the year, and three brick villas for women are in course of erection and nearing completion.

Porirua: The new Nurses' Home, containing over a hundred rooms, was completed, furniture and furnishings installed, and the laying-out of the grounds commenced. An incinerator and two garages were erected, additions have been made to a number of buildings, and renovations carried out as required. A new