

The various mail-services and rural deliveries have throughout the year been carried out to the Department's satisfaction, and little trouble has been experienced in regard to the ability of contractors to fulfil their obligations. It would seem that contractors generally are satisfied with the subsidies they receive.

RURAL DELIVERIES.

The rural-mail-delivery system is recognized as one which assists in the development of the country. Nevertheless, a strict watch is kept to ensure that services are not established unless the prospective revenue approximates the subsidy payable.

An outstanding feature of the year has been the activity in the Southland District in replacing small country post-offices by the more modern rural-delivery service. This activity denotes the popularity of the rural delivery with the Southland farming community.

The Department continues to extend the rural-delivery system to serve the less thickly populated areas; and it may be mentioned that, even with the payment by the box-holder of a fee, a relatively heavy loss still has to be borne by the Department.

MONEY-ORDERS.

The money-orders issued exceeded those of the previous year, but there was a slight decrease in value.

The total number of orders issued was 807,885, and the value £4,977,522, as against 803,481, valued at £4,995,090, for the previous year.

The commission amounted to £24,883 16s. 6d., an increase of £108 10s. 3d. over the previous year.

SAVINGS-BANK.

Although the withdrawals for the year exceeded the deposits by £859,559 7s. 9d., a comparison with the business of 1927-28 indicates that there has been an improvement of over £2,000,000. The deposits amounted to £27,252,381 and the withdrawals to £28,111,940, as against £27,611,066 and £30,584,997 respectively, for the previous year.

The interest credited to depositors was £1,745,050, and the amount standing at credit on the 31st March totalled £48,644,217, an increase of nearly £900,000 over the previous year.

DECENTRALIZATION OF POSTMEN AT WELLINGTON.

In the larger cities a certain amount of time is spent by postmen in travelling to and fro between the post-office and the starting and finishing points of their walks in distant suburbs. As an experiment, it has been decided to bring into operation at Wellington a decentralization scheme, under which twenty-four postmen will be transferred from the Chief Post-office—twelve to the Kilbirnie Post-office, and twelve to the Wellington South Post-office. It is expected that the change will result in a substantial saving in salaries and tram fares. If the scheme proves a success it will be extended both in Wellington and to other centres.

IMPERIAL WIRELESS AND CABLES CONFERENCE.

The development of radio science has focused attention upon the possibilities of radio communication supplanting in a great degree the use of the cable services as the main vehicle of communication between the countries of the world. In particular, the operation of the beam wireless system between Great Britain, Canada, and Australia, has made serious inroads in the revenue of cable administrations. The state of affairs became so serious that a conference of representatives of the Governments of Great Britain and her dominions, colonies, and protectorates, was convened to review the position, and, if possible, to find some means of co-ordinating the wireless and cable systems with a view to obviating the destructive competition. As a result, certain conclusions were arrived at, and recommendations were made for the merging of the wireless and cable interests under one control.