

of them were more or less demoralized during their absence. These remarks apply particularly to officers resident in the affected areas of Westport, Murchison, and Karama; but officers transferred to the districts to assist in the work of restoration were no less actuated by a desire to do their very best in the trying and dangerous conditions. The best traditions of the Service were upheld by all officers concerned; and for the excellent manner in which they rose to the emergency the Department expressed its highest praise. It is a matter for deep regret that overwork and exposure resulted in the death of Overseer D. O'Sullivan (see page 10).

In such a period of stress many duties outside the ordinary sphere fall to the lot of the Department and its officers, and are sympathetically and readily undertaken without remuneration. At the same time, the Department usually receives assistance from persons outside its ranks, and this chronicle would not be complete if it made no reference to the assistance spontaneously given the Department on this occasion by various other Departments and their officers, by the Union Steam Ship Company (who so readily placed the wireless installation on the "Kaitoke" at the Department's disposal, and co-operated in other ways), by the Westport Borough Council and other local bodies, and by many residents of the affected area. The manner in which the whole community worked together for the common good was an outstanding feature of the disaster.

CHARITY STAMP.

Following the lead of certain other countries, the Department, in conjunction with the Health Department, launched an effort to reap from the spirit of goodwill which is existent generally during the Christmas season a substantial sum of money to be devoted to a charitable purpose. The effort took the form of the issue of a "charity" stamp having a postage value of 1d. and a charity value of 1d.

The stamp was placed on sale at all post-offices in the Dominion on the 11th December, 1929, and was withdrawn on the 28th February, 1930. The gross value of the sales amounted to approximately £5,000.

MECHANICAL APPLIANCES.

The introduction of modern accounting methods has not been overlooked by the Department. During the past two years the system of preparing toll accounts by mechanical process has been adopted, and is at present in operation at Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, Hamilton, Invercargill, Napier, Palmerston North, Wanganui, and Wellington.

Accounting typewriter machines have been installed at Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Wanganui, and Wellington for the preparation of periodical accounts.

The bookkeeping-machine has been introduced into the Stores Branch at Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, and Wellington for the purpose of posting to the stock-ledgers. One of these machines is also in use for posting to the ledgers in the Accountant's Branch of the General Post Office.

A Powers machine plant, consisting of two tabulators, one sorting-machine, and eight punches, is in operation in the Accountant's Branch of the Head Office. With this equipment the accounts for the engineering districts of Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, and Wellington are being prepared, including a complete set of job-costing statements for each district. In addition, the stock records for every stock station in New Zealand are being prepared by the machines, the posting to the ledgers from the statements prepared being undertaken at the four centres by the bookkeeping-machine.

The Powers machine system has proved to be a scientific and practical means of enabling the operations of accounting, control, and statistics, indispensable to the success of business, to be made rapidly and economically with a maximum of detail. Its installation has resulted in economy of staff and greater accuracy, and in information being available for immediate review; it also provides for additional information being available at any time it is required, a proceeding which is practically impossible with any other system. The annual saving by the introduction of these mechanical appliances is estimated at £12,500.

BURGLARY OF POST-OFFICE PREMISES.

There were few cases during the year of burglary of post-office premises, and in no case was there very much loss. The only offence calling for special comment was that at Brunnerton on the night of the 6th–7th November, when gelignite was used in an unsuccessful endeavour to force a safe. The offender was apprehended a little later in Dunedin, following on his unsuccessfully endeavouring to force the strongroom at Caversham, and was duly convicted and sentenced. He proved to be an experienced criminal.

BUILDINGS.

During the year, buildings were erected as follow:—

Post-office buildings—

Colville.

Cust.

Garages—

Carterton.

Cheviot.

Hokitika.

Mercer.

New Lynn.

Martinborough.

Otahuhu.

Otorohanga.

Northcote.

Shirley.

Raglan.

Waiau.

Woodville.

At Ohakune a garage and store, together with accommodation for "carrier current" telephone equipment has been provided.