

The safe in the Parcels Branch, C.P.O., Wellington, was opened on the 10th January, 1909, and £100 in coin and parcels to the value of £40, besides a number of cancelled bank-notes, stolen. A young man arrested at Wellington on the 24th April was sentenced to three years' imprisonment for the crime.

#### BUILDINGS.

Contracts have been let for buildings at Epsom, Maungaturoto, Nuhaka, St. Bathans, Waipiro Bay (quarters), and Weraroa; and for additions to the office at Stratford.

Sites have been purchased at Frankton Junction, Foxton, Greenmeadows, Huntly, Kingsland, Ngaruawahia, Ongaonga, Papatoetoe, Pukekohe, Remuera, South Dunedin, Takapuna, Taradale, Te Karaka, and Whitianga.

During the year buildings were erected at Apiti, Birkenhead, Cambridge, Clevedon, Devonport, Fairlie, Featherston, Foxton, Geraldine, Huntly, Howick, Kaipara Flats, Kekerangu, Kimbolton, Matakoho, Mokotua, Morrinsville, Newmarket, Otorohanga, Port Awanui, Ohakune, Ophir, Pukekohe, Richmond, Taumarunui, Te Aro, Te Kuiti, Tolaga Bay, Toko, Utiku, Upper Hutt, Wallsend, and Woolston.

General repairs, additions, &c., were carried out during the year at the following offices: Aratapu, Ashburton, Auckland, Blenheim, Cheviot, Christchurch, Denniston, Eketahuna, Greytown, Gisborne, Hamilton, Hokitika, Kaikoura, Kihikihi, Kumara, Mangaweka, Manakau, Molesworth Street, Molesworth Street Stables, Napier, Nelson, Oamaru, Ohakune, Onehunga, Patea, Palmerston North, Port Albert, Rakaia, Reefton, Rough Ridge, Sumner, Waihi, Whakataki, and Wellington.

Plans for the new post-office at Auckland were prepared, and tenders invited, but declined. Amended plans have since been prepared, and a tender accepted for the work. The erection of the building has been commenced.

Plans have been prepared for buildings at Mount Roskill and Warkworth.

A fumigating-shed was erected on the Hobson Street Wharf, Auckland.

Properties were purchased and altered to suit the requirements of the Department at Burnett's Face, High Street (Christchurch), Moray Place (Dunedin), and Upper Symonds Street (Auckland).

The old building at Hastings has been removed, and the erection of a new building commenced.

A public chiming-clock, towards the cost of which the residents contributed £300, was erected in the Post-office building at Cambridge.

In July, 1908, tenders were invited for the erection of the General Post Office building at Wellington. It was estimated that the cost would be about £80,000; but, as the lowest tender exceeded this by some £20,000, it was decided not to accept any tender. On the 10th March, 1909, the Public Works Department made a start with the foundations, the cost of which is estimated at about £8,000.

The following post-offices, not in departmental buildings, were destroyed by fire: Dyerville, Glenore, Kerepehi, Leithfield, Mackaytown, Pareora East, Takahue, Towai, Waimaru, Walton, Whanaki, and Whangapoua.

The railway-station post-office at Fairlie was burned down on the 9th August, 1908. The business was carried on in temporary premises, which were also destroyed by fire on the 20th September following.

The Bull's Post and Telegraph Office, built in 1906, was destroyed by fire early in the morning of the 19th March, 1909. Temporary premises were secured opposite the burnt building, and all Post and Telegraph business resumed at 9 a.m. of the same day.

#### MONEY-ORDERS.

During the year there were 34 money-order offices opened and 3 closed, the number remaining open at the end of the year being 610.

488,084 money-orders were issued, for £2,050,684 6s. 10d., as compared with 441,487, for £1,773,590 17s. 1d., for the previous year—an increase of 46,597 in number and £277,093 9s. 9d. in amount.

371,424 money-orders, amounting to £1,747,670 19s. 1d., were paid, as against 337,791, for £1,523,907 17s. 4d., during 1907—an increase of 33,633 orders and £223,763 1s. 9d. in amount.

149,332 orders for £438,716 1s. 11d., were issued in places beyond New Zealand.

32,856 orders, for £139,000 4s. 2d., were issued in places beyond New Zealand for payment in the Dominion.

The commission received for money-orders amounted to £12,555 10s. 3d., as against £18,846 12s. 6d. for 1907. The decrease of £6,291 2s. 3d., is due to the reduction of the commission charges on the 1st January, 1908, by 50 per cent. The business is, however, steadily increasing and the revenue recovering.

During the year the system of advice of payment of money-orders has been extended to include the German Empire, British and French India, and Straits Settlements.

Arrangements have been made for the exchange of money-orders with Brazil, the French Colonies at Dahomey, French Congo, French Guinea, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Senegal, Upper Senegal, and Niger, Nyasaland Protectorate, and Palau (Pelew) Islands.

Money-order Conventions for the direct exchange of money-orders with France, Norway, and Japan are in course of negotiation.

Every effort is made to trace the senders of all money-orders remaining unpaid after a period of twelve months from the month of issue, with a view to repaying the amounts. During the year 1908, 1,119 orders were repaid to the remitters by means of new orders, and 571 duplicates of orders lost or destroyed were issued.

An amended form for inland money-order telegrams was issued on the 1st January, 1909.