

The system of nominations by depositors in favour of relatives who receive moneys at their credit in case of death is steadily growing in favour. During the year 388 additional nominations were made, bringing the total in force up to 1,309. The system is an excellent one, particularly for those persons whose whole estate is the amount of their savings in the bank, as it relieves their nominees from the procedure necessary in connection with the proving of the will or the obtaining of letters of administration.

The system of transfer of accounts between the Dominion and the United Kingdom resulted in £33,677 being transferred to the United Kingdom and £7,473 to New Zealand. A similar arrangement with the Australian Savings-banks resulted in £53,728 being transferred to Australia and £47,645 to New Zealand.

WORK PERFORMED FOR OTHER DEPARTMENTS.

The scope of the Department's usefulness to the State is constantly being widened, and there are very few services under State control for which the Post Office is not in some measure the agent dealing directly with the public.

Among the many branches of work undertaken during the year those deserving of particular mention are Customs duties collected for a total amount of £78,426, and for the same Department £10,156 for beer duty.

The agencies for the State Advances, Public Trust, and Government Insurance Departments lead to a very large amount of business. The amount received on account of State Advances reached a total of £1,911,903, for the Public Trustee £1,334,826, and for the Government Insurance £239,103; while the amounts paid were £1,927,428 for the State Advances and £1,333,611 for the Public Trustee.

Land and income tax may be paid at any money-order office, and the total amount of these taxes received during the year was £1,189,692. For the Valuation Department fees amounting to £6,396 were collected.

A very large number of claims chargeable to the appropriations made by Parliament are paid through the medium of the Post Office on behalf of the Treasury. Last year the amount so paid in cash was £2,708,698.

For the Pensions Department £477,941 was paid on account of old-age pensions, £48,680 on account of military pensions, and £35,822 on account of widows' pensions. There was also a considerable amount paid out on account of war pensions and miners' pensions.

Contributions to the National Provident Fund collected by Postmasters amounted to £19,053, and £129,957 was paid out on behalf of the Public Service Superannuation Fund.

Among the items which do not bulk largely with regard to amount but involve numerous transactions may be mentioned the sale of fishing licenses, to the value of £1,442, and game licenses, £3,642; machinery- and boiler-certificate fees collected, £12,804; mining licenses, £215; and sanatorium receipts, £1,425.

On behalf of the British Government £29,003 was paid to Imperial pensioners resident in New Zealand.

For the registration of births, deaths, and marriages and the performance of the marriage ceremony Postmasters collected £3,656. It may be a matter of interest that some Registrars are Postmistresses, and have proved themselves adept in performing the marriage ceremony.

Discount stamps valued at £782 and numbering 750,720 were sold, but the popularity of these stamps seems to be steadily diminishing, the sales being practically confined to Wellington.

Since the 1st January, 1916, the Post Office has also acted as agent for the Public Service Superannuation Fund in the matter of applications for loans, in addition to the payment of superannuation allowances.

The work performed in connection with the payment of allotments made by members of the New Zealand military forces has assumed very large proportions, the number of payments made amounting to the large total of 200,880 for £951,700.

Some idea of the other services performed may be obtained from the balance-sheet of the Post Office Account.

TELEGRAPHS.

The telegraph revenue shows a marked increase, which is principally due to two causes—(1) the increased telegraph rates which were in force for the last six months of the year, and (2) to a payment received from the Defence Department on account of the immense amount of work performed for that Department during the first fifteen months of the war. The grand total of the telegraph revenue, including telephone exchanges and miscellaneous receipts, amounted to £837,174, equivalent to an increase of almost 27 per cent. If to this be added the value of "free" Government telegrams, the total amounts to £846,259. The payments made on account of these services amounted to £658,572, an increase equal to about $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The increase in this class of expenditure has been kept down by reason of two main factors—the first, the large number of officers who have enlisted and whose places are taken by juniors; the second, the very considerable decrease in the number of Press messages, which has enabled the staffs at large centres to be materially reduced.

The outstanding feature of the telegraph business is the large and steadily increasing number of bureau communications, which are to some extent taking the place of the sixpenny telegram; for, while the number of ordinary telegrams decreased from 6,169,047 to 6,062,131, the number of bureau messages increased from 3,753,592 to 3,963,801. Thus, while the number of telegrams fell off by 106,916, the bureau communications increased by 210,209.

The extension of the telegraph and telephone lines was steadily proceeded with during the year. Twenty-seven new offices were opened, bringing the total number up to 2,413 on the 31st March. Of these, 334 were Morse telegraph-offices and 2,079 telephone-offices.