

in the various institutions. During the year a St. Helens Home was established at Invercargill. At Napier the Hospital Board has been able to establish a maternity hospital through the gift of a property suitable for the purpose by Mr. L. H. McHardy. Other Boards are considering the establishment of maternity wards in connection with the general hospitals under their control.

POST AND TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT.

The amount of revenue collected during the year was £1,815,558. It includes the war-tax of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. on each article of postal matter excepting newspapers, and the 2d. war-tax on telegrams.

Notwithstanding the fact that over £1,415,000 war-loan certificates were sold by the Post Office, the Savings-bank business reached an unprecedented total, the deposits being £15,576,408, and the withdrawals £12,957,420. The balance standing to credit of Post Office Savings-bank depositors reached the very considerable total of £25,603,209, an increase of £3,436,844.

The money-order and postal-note business was normal, the total issues for the year amounting to £4,269,341, and the payments to £3,945,525.

Of the total revenue, postages produced £913,458, telegrams £413,854, and telephone exchanges £317,275, the difference being made up of miscellaneous items.

The principal increases in business were in connection with the telephone exchange, and the allied work of bureau communications. The annual report of the Department gives full details of the matters here briefly noticed.

STAMP DEPARTMENT.

The revenue from this Department still shows an upward tendency. During the last seven or eight years it has increased considerably each year; prior to that period the revenue approximated half a million per annum, whereas this year the amount collected was £1,699,035, as against £1,470,307 last year, an increase of £228,728.

The revenue from the totalizator, due to the increased duties under the Finance Act and the additional investments by the public during the year, shows a marked increase—viz., from £179,547 in 1915–16 to £251,436 in 1916–17.

The bank-note tax has, owing to the withdrawal of gold coin from circulation and the legalizing of bank-notes, increased by approximately 25 per cent.

The fact must not be overlooked that if the shipping-facilities do not soon return to normal conditions a considerable fall in the revenue from stamp duties may be expected.

LAND REVENUE.

The gross revenue received from Crown and endowment lands during the year amounted to £1,241,366, made up as follows:—

	£
Ordinary Crown lands	485,317
Land for settlements	437,980
Cheviot Estate	17,199
National endowment	120,319
Primary- and secondary-education endowments ..	92,161
Other sources	88,390
	<hr/>
	£1,241,366

The amounts outstanding at the close of the year were £25,478 postponements of rental and £22,815 ordinary arrears.

LAND FOR SOLDIERS.

During the year ended 31st March, 1917, twenty-five settlements were purchased with a view to settling thereon soldiers who have been discharged from active service. Eighteen of the settlements have been subdivided and offered for selection, and the majority of the sections have been allotted. In addition, 201,210 acres of Crown and settlement lands have been subdivided and offered to discharged men.