

SESSION II.
1918.
NEW ZEALAND.

POST AND TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT

(REPORT OF THE) FOR THE YEAR 1917-18.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

MY LORD,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 18th October, 1918.

I have the honour to submit to Your Excellency the report of the Post and Telegraph Department for the financial year 1917-18.

Notwithstanding the state of war the business of the Department during the year was very satisfactory. The total revenue amounted to £1,837,260; the expenditure amounted to £1,489,446: there was thus a balance of receipts over payments of £347,814. The regular expenditure shows a serious increase due to the rise, amounting in some cases to 300 per cent., in the cost of materials required for the maintenance of the Department's services.

The confidence of the public in the Post Office Savings-bank is markedly maintained. The deposits during the year ended on the 31st December, 1917, exceeded the withdrawals by £2,645,360. The returns disclose that the accumulated savings of depositors in the Post Office Savings-bank now exceed twenty-nine million pounds sterling.

Matters of detail with reference to the revenue, expenditure, and business are fully set out in the report.

Your Excellency will be pleased to learn that over 52 per cent. of the permanent staff eligible for military service and over 300 of the casual staff have joined the New Zealand Expeditionary Force. I deeply regret to state that some of the Department's officers have lost their lives, and many have been wounded. I have pleasure in stating that many have received decorations and other signal marks of distinction.

Despite the fact that the loss of the services of many officers of long experience and proved efficiency was involved, the Department was able to release every medically fit man of the First Division of the Expeditionary Force Reserve, exclusive of a few wireless operators retained at the request of the British Government, and at the same time to continue to the public full services. But with the calling-up of the Second Division the Department was faced with the alternatives of appealing for the exemption of the majority of the members of that division to enable it to continue its pre-war services, or curtailing the services to enable it to release men as they were required by the military authorities. The latter course was adopted without hesitation; and it is gratifying to report that, while the curtailments are materially assisting the Department to achieve the object with which they were made, the inconvenience to which the public is put is not serious.

During my absence from the Dominion this important Department was ably administered by the Hon. W. D. S. MacDonald.

I have, &c.,

J. G. WARD,
Postmaster-General.

His Excellency the Governor-General, Wellington.