

practice to have them collected from Woolwich by lighter and conveyed direct to steamer. None of the London companies now carry explosives to New Zealand, as two of the companies carry passengers, and the third—the Tyser Line (Limited)—calls at Australian ports, and cargo of this nature must be discharged at the first port of call. It has thus become necessary to ship from Liverpool, and we have to secure the co-operation of the South-eastern and Chatham Railway and the London and North-western Railway, the former to put at our disposal the requisite special vans, and to facilitate transport over their system until the vans pass into the custody of the London and North-western Railway, over which system they are ultimately taken to Liverpool. At the latter port we have to engage the services of an explosives lighterman, who receives the consignment from the vans into his craft and takes it alongside steamer in the river. A very careful and close estimate of the time needed for the various operations is imperative, as we otherwise incur charges for watching, &c.

Clearance at Customs.—This is done either on special shipping-bill previous to steamer's departure in the case of licensed goods, or in the usual way, after steamer has left, for goods not requiring license.

Insurance, Marine and War.—The figures necessary for taking out provisional cover are prepared by the Department, also the amounts which are finally declared. It may be pointed out that in arriving at the values for the final insurance, great care must be exercised to see that the margin allowed is sufficient to protect the Government against increased costs should a replacement become necessary. This may be instanced as one of the greatest advantages of combining the two branches, Indents and Shipping.

Accounts of shipping charges are rendered quarterly to the several Departments on whose behalf shipments are effected.

Shipments inward.—These are not, of course, numerous, but the Department has been of service to the Military authorities in the expeditious clearance and collection of the cases of personal files of the various reinforcements. There are also the cases of parliamentary papers arriving at intervals.

The foregoing will convey in a general way the exceedingly varied nature of the matters forming the duties of the branch, and it will be realized that a knowledge of trade terms and customs is essential. Not only is this needed in dealing with contractors, but also in the communications which are constantly passing between the Department and the Government's technical advisers, and subsequently in reporting to the Government the decisions arrived at and action taken.

The following are approximate figures relating to orders, contracts, shipments, &c., dealt with during the period under review :—

Orders received	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	324
Contracts placed	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	499
Standing orders received	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	16
„ contracts placed	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	29
Shipments effected	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	514
Letters, &c., despatched—Inland	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4,000
„ Colonial	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,300

The figures relative to orders, contracts, &c., are, however, somewhat misleading, as, owing to war conditions, many orders received and only partially dealt with during 1914 and 1915 entailed very considerable attention during the closing months of 1916. In addition there are the orders placed in New Zealand, with which the Office has to keep in close touch and render manufacturers such assistance and support as they may need.

IMMIGRATION AND ADVERTISING BRANCH.

Reduced-rate passages are now being granted to farmers, farm labourers (not eligible for military service), their wives and families, women domestic servants, persons who have been nominated in the Dominion, and those nominated here by New-Zealanders at present in the United Kingdom. There is a great deal of correspondence entailed in this connection—viz., answering questions, making exhaustive inquiries as to the applicant's *bona fides*, character, health, &c. When an application has been approved, arrangements have to be made for booking the passages, issuing the contract tickets, and advising particulars as to embarkation, &c. Considerable increase in the work of the branch has been caused as a direct result of the war—e.g., the question of passports, as every person leaving this country must have a passport; and this necessitates a large amount of correspondence. In the earlier part of the war it would often happen that, after a considerable number of persons had booked on a certain steamer, it would be commandeered by the Imperial authorities, and in this case the passages had to be cancelled and fresh arrangements made for a later steamer.

Parties of domestic servants are being sent to the Dominion regularly, and the girls are concentrated at the Hostel the evening prior to embarkation. Officers from this Department are in attendance to introduce them to the Matron, and see that they have all the necessary papers, passports, &c. Notwithstanding that full instructions are always clearly given to the girls, there are often matters which have to be urgently attended to. Sometimes, for example, a girl will leave her baggage at a railway junction where she had to change on her way to London, and inquiries have to be made and the baggage traced in time to be placed on the special boat train the next morning. Again, a girl will on arrival at the Hostel find she has left her passport at home, or will not have one at all, and unless it is obtained in time she would not be allowed to embark. In this connection it is essential that the officer in attendance should be thoroughly conversant with the procedure to be followed and the proper officials to be approached in such cases. On the day of embarkation an