

## CHIEF TELEGRAPH ENGINEER'S VISIT TO EUROPE AND AMERICA.

During the year a visit to Europe and America was made by the Chief Telegraph Engineer, Mr. E. A. Shrimpton, with a view to investigating the latest developments in connection with land-line and wireless telegraphy and telephony, and kindred subjects, and also with the object of facilitating the delivery of overdue shipments of telegraph and telephone materials. Much valuable information was gained, and a report covering the whole field of investigation has been submitted to the Minister of Telegraphs.

Rapid developments have taken place in recent years in connection with the engineering work of the Department, and much valuable information as to recent developments and operating methods and systems has been gained by the Chief Telegraph Engineer. This information will assist in bringing the telegraph and telephone services of the Dominion into line with the latest developments abroad, and in utilizing improvements connected therewith for increasing the efficiency of our telegraph and telephone communications.

## POST-OFFICE SAFE-DEPOSIT SYSTEM.

The Post Office safe-deposit system, which provides facilities for the public leaving with the Post Office for safe custody wills, deeds, insurance policies, debentures of all kinds, and other valuable securities for a small annual fee, ranging from 5s. upwards according to the size of the package, has now been in existence for a sufficient time to prove its usefulness. It is somewhat of a surprise that in the smaller centres, where it was anticipated such a system would be a great boon, it has not been taken advantage of to so great an extent as in the cities. However, there are evidences that a certain section of the public fully appreciates the great advantages to be derived from the arrangements made by such a widespread institution as the Post Office for the safe custody of valuable securities and documents.

## ROBBERY AT RUNCIMAN.

On the 28th May, 1920, the postman at Runciman was attacked on the road, the post-office keys stolen from him, and the post-office robbed. A subsequent examination of the books showed a deficiency of £101 5s. 10½d. This was made up of cash to the amount of £50 7s. 7½d. and paid pension advices and cheques to the amount of £50 18s. 3d. Pension advices and cheques to the value of £45 15s. 5½d. were afterwards recovered at various places on the side of the railway-line to Auckland. They had apparently been thrown from a train. An exhaustive attempt to trace the perpetrator of the offence met with no success.

## PILFERING FROM PARCEL-MAILS.

A number of cases of pilfering from parcel-mails received from abroad was reported during the year. It was established in practically every case that the pilfering took place before the arrival of the mail in the Dominion. Pilfering from parcel-mails has now almost wholly ceased.

On the 6th August, 1920, a minor case was reported of pilfering from parcel-mails left overnight in closed wagons in a railway-yard. The case was investigated without success.

## ARRANGEMENTS DURING AUCKLAND TRAMWAY STRIKE AND CESSATION OF TRAM SERVICE ON ACCOUNT OF COAL SHORTAGE.

During the cessation of the tramway service in Auckland from the 4th to the 7th June on account of the tramway strike, and from the 27th September to the 10th October owing to the coal shortage, the following arrangements were made in that city in connection with the clearance of receiving-boxes and with postmen's deliveries: Receiving-boxes at suburban post-offices were cleared only twice daily, at noon and at 5 p.m., instead of at every hour from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and at 10 p.m. These clearances included mail-matter collected from the suburban receivers during the morning and afternoon. Postmen's deliveries were made as usual, except that only two deliveries were made daily in those residential portions of the suburbs where there were ordinarily three deliveries.

## GRAY MEMORIAL PRIZE.

The Gray Memorial Medals for 1917, 1918, and 1919 were awarded to Mr. H. M. Patrick, clerk, Chief Post-office, Auckland; Mr. P. Baikie, clerk, General Post Office; and Mr. G. H. Longdin, clerk, Chief Post-office, Christchurch, respectively.

## PARCEL-POST: CASH ON DELIVERY.

From the 1st January, 1920, a system of cash on delivery for parcels posted in the United Kingdom addressed to New Zealand, and *vice versa*, was inaugurated. The system enables a person in New Zealand to order goods from the United Kingdom, or a person in the United Kingdom to order goods from New Zealand, have them despatched by parcel-post, and pay for them on delivery. For parcels posted in New Zealand addressed to the United Kingdom a fee of 2½d. for each £1 or fraction of £1 of the trade charge, and a special posting fee of 3d., is payable in addition to the ordinary postage. On parcels received from the United Kingdom a special delivery fee of 4d. per parcel is charged.

## WAR-LOAN CERTIFICATES.

War-loan certificates, which were first issued by the Post Office on the 11th August, 1916, proved a very acceptable form of investment to that portion of the public which was either not able or not desirous of investing in ordinary Government bonds. They were sold continuously from the date of the first issue until the 30th October, 1920, and the total amount of sales was £4,619,983 10s.