

altogether insignificant, and only gradually increase according as the Post Office became a recognised channel for making remittances.

In proportion, however, as the issue was small, so would the expense of carrying out the system be light.

Supernumerary
Clerks,

The great extension which has lately taken place in the operations of the Post Office, by making the duties for the persons employed more complex, has shewn the necessity of providing a constant supply of properly trained and efficient Officers to fill any vacancies which may from time to time occur.

The unavoidable result of the present system is, that such vacancies are filled up by the appointment of persons whose qualifications have not been tested, and whose fitness therefore for the duties to be performed cannot be ascertained beforehand. It is proposed as a first step towards correcting this evil, to establish a regular system of promotions, and only to appoint to offices of trust and responsibility those who have proved themselves qualified in subordinate situations.

With this view, a system has been commenced in the Auckland Post Office, of appointing young men of education to supernumerary clerkships, at a small salary—with a prospect of promotion to permanent situations after sufficient probation.

By this plan a constant staff of Officers will be maintained familiar with the special duties of the department, and always available for emergencies.

Payment for extra hours,

A practice has crept into the Auckland Post Office of giving allowances to the persons employed therein, at a certain rate per hour for every hour they may be detained in performing duties of the Office, beyond the regular times of attendance.

This arrangement appears to involve an altogether false principle, inasmuch as it proceeds on the assumption that persons holding appointments in the public service are not bound to devote their whole time to the duties of their Office, but that after a certain time of the day the responsibility which is imposed upon them ceases. Indeed, so far from discouraging ideas of this nature, the arrangement in question holds out a direct premium on neglect of duty during office hours. A fixed salary being paid for attendance during the regular hours, whether the amount of work performed be great or small, steady application confers no benefit, but on the contrary, at least so far as mere pecuniary considerations go, occasions a positive loss, tending as it does to diminish the number of hours, for which extra pay is given.

The experiment has as yet been confined to a small sphere, and has, so far as it has been tried, worked tolerably well, but it is evident that were it to be extended generally throughout the colony, great abuses would be likely frequently to occur. On the other hand, the adoption of the system in one Office and not in others would, by conferring upon that Office exceptional privileges, have the effect of introducing invidious distinctions which could not fail to be detrimental to the service.

In abolishing these extra payments, however, it is right to bear in mind the effect which this step will have upon the salaries of the persons interested.

In the preparation of the Estimates for the ensuing year, this point has not been lost sight of, and an attempt has been made to shew how, by a readjustment of the permanent salaries, the loss of such perquisites may be compensated. The following is the scale upon which these extra payments are now made:—

To senior sorters	...	...	...	...	...	2s. 6d. per hour.
Other persons	...	...	...	...	...	1s. 6d. "

—It may be remembered that there does not appear to have been any authority for the second of these payments.

The system was adopted at the suggestion of the late Postmaster, and the letter from the Colonial Secretary duly authorised the employment of clerks to be paid at the rate of 2s. 6d, making no mention of any other persons.

The rate per annum of the payments made on this account during the past year, as well as the actual expenditure, is shewn in the following table. The difference between them arises from the fact that in two cases the recipients, having been appointed after the commencement of the year, only received a fractional part of the sum which would have become due had they held appointments during the whole twelvemonths.

Rate per annum.				Actual payment.			
£ s. d.				£ s. d.			
First Clerk	...	...	12 5 0		12	5	0
Second ditto	...	...	10 15 0		10	15	0
Third ditto	...	...	11 17 6		11	17	6
Letter carrier	...	...	5 18 0		4	8	6
"	...	...	12 0 0		9	0	0
Messenger	...	...	5 8 0		5	8	0
£58 3 6				£53 14 0			

—The sums so expended have hitherto been charged as contingencies.