

FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT
ON THE
TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT, NEW ZEALAND.

General Post Office,
Wellington, 5th July, 1868.

SIR,—

I have the honor to submit for the information of your Excellency the Annual Report on the Telegraph Service of the Colony, for the year ended 30th June, 1868.

At the date of the last Annual Report I was compelled to state that the Telegraph Department was in a condition far from satisfactory ; I am now able to say that great improvement has been effected. The Service has been placed under the charge of Mr. Lemon, as General Manager, who has displayed much energy in improving the organization and discipline of the Telegraph Staff, and in furthering the re-construction and extension of the various lines throughout the Middle and North Islands. His report shews that the work of the New Zealand Telegraph is conducted on a very economical footing, and that considering the peculiar difficulties attendant upon the construction and maintenance of Telegraph Lines in this Colony, the cost of those recently erected has been moderate, and the interruptions arising from injuries to the lines have been of short duration.

The increased extent to which the public have made use of the Telegraph during the past year, notwithstanding the prevailing commercial depression, and the augmentation of the Cash Receipts of the Department, is very satisfactory ; there is a reason to anticipate further progress during the current year.

The re-construction of the lines in the Middle Island, which had become very defective, owing in a great measure to the manner in which they had been originally erected, has made good progress, and the extensions from Wellington to Napier, and from Greymouth to Westport, have been either actually completed or are on the point of completion.

The route by which the Main Trunk Line shall be extended from Napier to Auckland is yet undetermined, but the difficulties in the way of a settlement of this question will very shortly be removed, and I trust that the greater part of this line will be completed during the current year. The whole of the necessary material is already in the Colony.

Elaborate and valuable tables are appended to this report, showing in great detail the cost, the progress, and the condition of the existing machinery for supplying telegraphic communication throughout the Colony.

I should be glad if the financial condition of the Colony would admit of the early extension of the Telegraph from Wellington, or rather from Masterton in the Wairarapa Valley, to Wanganui and Taranaki. The revenue which would doubtless be returned by a Telegraph in this direction would be considerable, while its importance in a political point of view is a matter for serious consideration.

Mr. Lemon's report does not treat of the Telegraph between Auckland and Waikato, as that line has not hitherto been under the control of the Head Office in Wellington. It was however on the first day of this month placed on the same footing as other portions of the Telegraph Service. A considerable reduction will have to be effected in the cost at which this line has hitherto been kept up, and which is altogether out of proportion to the revenue derived from it.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your Excellency's most obedient Servant,

JOHN HALL.

Commissioner of Telegraphs.

His Excellency Sir George Ferguson Bowen, G.C.M.G.

&c.,

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