

The total number of post offices open in the several postal districts on the 31st December last, and the number in 1879, may be gathered from the following table:—

| Postal Districts.      | 1880.          |                            |                   |         | 1879.          |                            |                   |         |
|------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------|
|                        | Chief Offices. | Second-class Post Offices. | Sub-Post Offices. | Totals. | Chief Offices. | Second-class Post Offices. | Sub-Post Offices. | Totals. |
| Auckland ... ..        | 1              | 2                          | 177               | 180     | 1              | 2                          | 172               | 175     |
| Thames ... ..          | 1              | ...                        | 14                | 15      | 1              | ...                        | 13                | 14      |
| New Plymouth ... ..    | 1              | ..                         | 14                | 15      | 1              | ...                        | 14                | 15      |
| Napier ... ..          | 1              | 2                          | 50                | 53      | 1              | 2                          | 50                | 53      |
| Wanganui ... ..        | 1              | ...                        | 22                | 23      | 1              | ...                        | 21                | 22      |
| Wellington ... ..      | 1              | ...                        | 60                | 61      | 1              | ...                        | 60                | 61      |
| Nelson ... ..          | 1              | 1                          | 26                | 28      | 1              | 1                          | 26                | 28      |
| Westport ... ..        | 1              | ...                        | 16                | 17      | 1              | ...                        | 16                | 17      |
| Greymouth ... ..       | 1              | ...                        | 24                | 25      | 1              | ...                        | 24                | 25      |
| Hokitika ... ..        | 1              | ...                        | 29                | 30      | 1              | ...                        | 29                | 30      |
| Blenheim ... ..        | 1              | 2                          | 12                | 15      | 1              | 2                          | 14                | 17      |
| Christchurch ... ..    | 1              | 2                          | 132               | 135     | 1              | 2                          | 128               | 131     |
| Timaru ... ..          | 1              | ...                        | 37                | 38      | 1              | ...                        | 37                | 38      |
| Oamaru ... ..          | 1              | ...                        | 18                | 19      | 1              | ...                        | 17                | 18      |
| Dunedin ... ..         | 1              | 1                          | 142               | 144     | 1              | 1                          | 145               | 147     |
| Invercargill ... ..    | 1              | 1                          | 55                | 57      | 1              | 1                          | 51                | 53      |
| Chatham Islands ... .. | ...            | 1                          | ...               | 1       | ...            | ...                        | 2                 | 2       |
| Totals ... ..          | 16             | 12                         | 828               | 856     | 16             | 11                         | 819               | 846     |

16 money order and savings bank offices were established, and three closed.

The number of officers on the staff of the department at the close of the year was 1,060, against 1,056 the previous year, as shown by the following statement:—

RETURN of Officers of the Postal Department for the Years 1879 and 1880.

| Officers.                            |    | 1880. | 1879. | Officers.                |       | 1880. | 1879. |
|--------------------------------------|----|-------|-------|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Postmaster-General ... ..            | 1  | 1     | 1     | Postmasters ... ..       | 12    | 11    | 11    |
| Secretary ... ..                     | 1  | 1     | 1     | Clerks and Cadets ... .. | 113   | 121   | 121   |
| Inspector of Post Offices ... ..     | 1  | 1     | 1     | Sub-Postmasters ... ..   | 828   | 819   | 819   |
| Accountant Money Order and Savings   |    |       |       | Letter-carriers ... ..   | 55    | 55    | 55    |
| Bank Department ... ..               | 1  | 1     | 1     | Messengers ... ..        | 15    | 13    | 13    |
| Clerks in General Post Office ... .. | 6  | 5     | 5     | Mail-cart drivers ... .. | ...   | 1     | 1     |
| Clerks in Money Order and Savings    |    |       |       | Shipping officers ... .. | 2     | 2     | 2     |
| Bank Department ... ..               | 6  | 6     | 6     |                          |       |       |       |
| Mail Agents ... ..                   | 3  | 3     | 3     | Totals                   | 1,060 | 1,056 | 1,056 |
| Chief Postmasters ... ..             | 16 | 16    | 16    |                          |       |       |       |

65 additional stamp licenses were issued in 1880, and 12 cancelled. The total number of licensed stamp vendors on the 31st December last was 394, who received £1,020 4s. 3d. by way of poundage on the sale of stamps.

The cost of the carriage of interprovincial and intercolonial mails by unsubsidized vessels was £2,695 7s. 7d.

3,225 private boxes were let, which, together with the fees on 199 private bags, produced a revenue of £3,167 10s.

The total number of miles travelled in connection with the transmission of the inland mails increased to 2,631,568, from 2,589,114 in 1879, and the annual cost from £33,719 11s. 1d. to £35,062 1s. 1d.

The arrangement stated in last report to have been made for payment to the railway for the carriage of mails was not carried into effect. Mails continue to be carried free over railway-lines, except in the case of special mail trains, payment for which is made at the rate of five shillings per mile.

The net cost of the San Francisco mail service was £8,166 14s. 2d., and of the Galle-Brindisi service £9,464 6s. 7d.

The names of the following post offices have been changed:—Katikati to Waterford; Ngahina-pouri to Tuhikarama (Auckland); Sherwood to Wargrave (Napier); Clinton to Dunganville (Grey-mouth); Winchmore to Lauriston (Christchurch); Waimate Junction to Studholme Junction (Timaru); Puki-iviti to Shag Point (Oamaru); Warrington to Evansdale (Dunedin); Waihopai to Longbush (Invercargill)

Government Insurance agencies have been undertaken by the Postmasters at Ohaupo, Kihikihi, Inglewood, Normanby, Opunake, Wakefield, Sheffield, Waikari, Woolston, and Wyndham. The agencies at Katikati, Te Aro, Leithfield, Malvern, and Hyde have been closed.

The post offices at Russell and Waitara have been made second-class offices.

The Wanganui Post Office had a narrow escape from destruction by fire on the 12th of May last, and which was only averted by the timely efforts of the local fire brigade. With the exception of a few old records, no other postal documents or property was destroyed. The damage to the building was, fortunately, very slight.

In closing the general remarks to this report, it has been suggested that a brief statement showing the progress of the department within the last ten years would be an appropriate conclusion. The occasion is otherwise opportune, because in 1880, as in 1871, the colony was recovering from effects produced by a period of depression of more or less severity. The statement, for purposes of comparison, cannot but prove interesting as well as instructive. The rapid stride made by the colony since 1871 is a matter of history. But few persons, however, would be prepared to learn that the