

POST OFFICE.

The number of letters, post-cards, books and pattern-packets, and newspapers, delivered and posted during the year, compared with the number dealt with in 1890, was as under :—

					1891.	1890.	Increase.
Letters—Delivered	..	..	..	..	23,867,402	22,415,263	
Posted	..	..	..	..	23,745,462	21,501,937	
					<u>47,612,864</u>	<u>43,917,200</u>	<u>3,695,664</u>
Post-cards—Delivered	..	..	..	..	1,097,788	1,019,434	
Posted	..	..	..	..	1,181,141	991,065	
					<u>2,278,929</u>	<u>2,010,499</u>	<u>268,430</u>
Books and Sample-packets—Delivered	..	..	..	..	3,342,781	2,838,329	
Posted	..	..	..	..	3,827,980	3,320,801	
					<u>7,170,761</u>	<u>6,159,130</u>	<u>1,011,631</u>
Newspapers—Delivered	..	..	..	..	9,768,226	9,221,212	
Posted	..	..	..	..	8,733,686	8,691,522	
					<u>18,501,912</u>	<u>17,912,734</u>	<u>589,178</u>

The letters increased 8·42, post-cards 13·35, books and sample-packets 16·42, and newspapers 3·29 per cent.

The increase in 1890 was—Letters 3·82, post-cards 8·67, books and sample-packets 14·45, and newspapers 7·13 per cent.

The average number of letters posted per head of population was estimated to be 37·70; in 1890 the average was 34·37.

The revenue for the financial year ended the 31st March last amounted to £209,894 7s. 4d., compared with £223,542 9s. 7d. for 1890–91, a decrease of £13,648 2s. 3d., which is to be attributed to the loss of postage from the reduction of the ocean letter-rate from 6d. to 2½d., and to the receipts from Foreign Post Offices in aid of the San Francisco and Direct mail-services, amounting to £15,697, having been transferred from revenue to the expenditure side of the account, and treated as a recovery in reduction of the vote for “Conveyance of mails by sea.”

The expenditure was £153,698 5s. 4d., compared with £158,205 10s. 8d. for the previous year, a decrease of £4,507 5s. 4d., notwithstanding that payments were closer up to the 31st March than formerly. The liabilities outstanding at the end of the year amounted to £7,787, compared with £12,013 for the previous year:

The expenditure of the year was £56,196 2s. less than the revenue.

The estimated value of the free correspondence was £63,579 16s. 4d.

The total estimated business of the Post Office for the year was therefore £273,474 3s. 8d., leaving a balance of £119,775 18s. 4d. in favour of the department, after deducting the expenditure. The credit balance for 1890–91 was £132,810 16s.

£1,521 7s. was collected for the registration of births, deaths, and marriages.

For certificates issued in connection with inspection of machinery, £3,375 10s. 2d. was collected.

Fees amounting to £11,344 8s. under the Live-stock Acts were received.

For game licenses the sum of £1,401 5s. was collected.

The amount of property-tax paid through the Post Office was £234,132 4s. 3d., representing 23,481 payments.

Gratuities paid for the carriage of mails by unsubsidised vessels amounted to £7,171 4s. 8d.

The fees received for 3,874 private boxes and 339 private bags amounted to £4,561 10s.

The suburbs of Riccarton and Collingwood, Christchurch, have been included in the letter-carrier's delivery. A daily delivery has been established at Kaitangata; and the afternoon delivery at Kumara abolished.

A weekly half-holiday is now enjoyed by letter-carriers, generally on Saturday afternoon, except where the business half-holiday is observed on some other day of the week. To minimise inconvenience to the public, the correspondence which would otherwise have been taken out by carrier in ordinary course is delivered at post-offices to such addressees as may call.

Thirteen receiving-boxes were established—one each at New Plymouth, Feilding, Greytown North, Wellington, Reefton, Riccarton, Upper Riccarton, Waitotara, Totara Flat, Christchurch, and Timaru, and two at Auckland. Five receiving-boxes were closed.

The total number of pillar, wall, and lamp-post receivers at the close of the year was 314.

8,325,608 letters, 364,499 post-cards, 1,003,121 books, circulars, &c., and 2,183,833 newspapers were delivered by letter-carriers.

On the completion of the railway between Palmerston and Napier, railway travelling post-offices were placed on the line.

Fifty-five post-offices were established, five reopened, and sixteen closed during the year, as under :—