

REGISTERED LETTERS.

The number of registered articles dealt with in 1896, compared with the numbers in 1885, 1890, and 1895, is shown below :—

Postal Districts.	1885.			1890.			1895.			1896.		
	From Places beyond the Colony.	Registered in the Colony.	Totals.	From Places beyond the Colony.	Registered in the Colony.	Totals.	From Places beyond the Colony.	Registered in the Colony.	Totals.	From Places beyond the Colony.	Registered in the Colony.	Totals.
Auckland ..	5,890	22,124	28,014	7,119	34,398	41,517	11,042	47,350	58,392	7,396	56,550	63,946
Thames ..	205	2,879	3,084	130	4,781	4,911	226	7,955	8,181	1,536	12,052	13,588
New Plymouth ..	675	2,876	3,551	341	3,372	3,713	505	8,576	9,081	1,323	10,503	11,826
Gisborne ..	108	922	1,030	118	2,120	2,238	228	3,812	4,040	422	3,316	3,738
Napier ..	892	5,453	6,345	999	10,911	11,910	1,195	16,917	18,112	2,944	23,051	25,995
Wanganui ..	283	4,500	4,783	211	6,060	6,271	397	16,300	16,697	1,970	15,495	17,465
Wellington ..	4,757	19,218	23,975	6,129	30,369	36,498	10,055	50,900	60,955	7,780	60,497	68,277
Nelson ..	559	2,432	2,991	322	3,430	3,752	1,239	6,956	8,195	916	7,356	8,272
Westport ..	45	1,438	1,483	112	3,254	3,366	194	4,409	4,603	768	6,136	6,904
Greymouth ..	125	2,835	2,960	102	8,879	8,981	365	4,989	5,954	1,024	7,883	8,907
Hokitika ..	173	1,907	2,080	95	2,579	2,674	206	3,624	3,830	512	3,779	4,291
Blenheim ..	181	1,413	1,594	92	3,193	3,285	120	4,447	4,567	576	4,368	4,944
Christchurch ..	3,717	13,678	17,395	3,659	20,404	24,063	4,465	28,302	32,767	5,760	45,069	50,829
Timaru ..	440	3,153	3,593	312	3,551	3,863	1,510	4,514	6,024	640	5,253	5,893
Oamaru ..	316	1,947	2,263	278	2,505	2,783	1,252	2,569	3,821	426	3,433	3,859
Dunedin ..	5,645	12,737	18,382	4,615	19,696	24,311	5,520	28,188	33,708	4,255	33,288	37,543
Invercargill ..	1,614	6,661	8,275	1,740	9,819	11,559	2,579	14,507	17,086	2,176	17,218	19,394
Totals ..	25,625	106,173	131,798	26,374	169,321	195,695	41,098	254,315	295,413	40,424	315,247	355,671

INLAND MAIL-SERVICES.

The number of contracts for inland mails in operation in 1896 was 723, as compared with 707 in 1895.

The length of inland postal routes by road (counted one way only) was 8,683½ miles, and the total number of miles travelled 1,893,428, at an average cost of 3·44d. per mile. In 1895 the respective mileages were 8,255½ and 1,860,816, and the average cost 3·47d.

Ordinary trains with mails travelled 2,512,881 miles, as against 2,396,533 in 1895.

The estimated sum payable to the Railway Department for the conveyance of mails by ordinary trains was £29,849 5s., being an average of 2·85d. per mile.

The following mail-services were established during the year :—

Auckland—

Weekly: Awhitu Central—Manukau Heads; Coromandel—Whangapoua—Kuaotunu; Ormsby's Farm (Pirongia—Te Rau-a-Moa Road)—Kakepuku; Pirongia—Te Rau-a-Moa; Rangiahua—Umawera—Mangamuka; steamer landing and post-office—Te Kao; Waimamaku—Wekaweka.

Christchurch—

Twice daily: Christchurch—Blandville (by train).
Daily: Christchurch—Bromley; Christchurch—Upper Riccarton.
Thrice weekly: Southbridge—Little Rakaia.
Weekly: Cheviot—Port Robinson; Cheviot—Spotswood.

Dunedin—

Daily: Kaihiku Post-office and Railway-station; Miller's Flat Post-office and Coach Road.

Greymouth—

Daily: Reefton—Black's Point—Crushington (Reefton—Black's Point not previously subsidised).
Thrice weekly: Mawheraiti Post-office and Railway-station.

Hokitika—

Weekly: Hokitika—Koiterangi.

Invercargill—

Twice weekly: Otago—Haldane.
Weekly: Te Anau—Glade House (re-established, 1st November—31st December, 1896).

Napier—

Daily: Napier—Spit (delivery of letters from Spit instead of Napier).
Weekly: Dannevirke—Mangatoro Valley.

Nelson—

Weekly: Collingwood—Bainham; Collingwood—Parkeston; Sherry River—Wangapeka.

New Plymouth—

Weekly: Toko—Huiroa.

Oamaru—

Daily: Borton's (railway siding)—Kokoamu; Waitaki South Post-office and Railway-station.
Weekly: Omarama—Lake Pukaki (new service, extending Kurow—Omarama service).