

The several subsidised mail sea services, the subsidy payments for the year 1896, the dates when established, and the date on which each terminates are shown as follows:—

Service	Subsidy or Payment.	Duration of Service.		Number of Voyages per Annum.	Mileage for complete Voyage.	Cost per Mile.
		When established.	When terminated or terminable.			
	£ s. d.					s. d.
Auckland and San Francisco ..	7,622 19 4	April, 1871	Nov., 1897	13	11,916	0 11·81
Auckland and Fiji ..	1,690 0 0	June, 1880	..	13	2,334	1 1·37
Auckland and South Pacific Islands ..	1,200 0 0	June, 1885	..	12	6,992	0 3·43
Auckland and Devonport ..	60 0 0	Aug., 1863	Dec., 1899	939	6	0 2·56
Auckland and Great Barrier ..	250 0 0	Oct., 1891	Dec., 1899	52	120	0 9·62
Dargaville and Tangihua ..	75 0 0	Nov., 1893	Dec., 1899	52	46	0 7·53
Helensville and Matakoho ..	480 0 0	Jan., 1881	Dec., 1899	52	118	0 4·84
Helensville and Dargaville ..				104	170	
Horeke, Kohukohu, Rawene, Waitapu, and Opononi ..	194 10 0	Jan., 1889	Dec., 1899	52	48	1 6·70
Russell and Opua ..	90 0 0	Jan., 1889	Dec., 1899	104	16	1 0·98
Whangaroa and Totara North ..	22 0 0	Jan., 1891	Dec., 1899	52	2	4 2·77
Wellington, Ketu Bay, Maud Island, Maori Bay, Homewood, and Havelock ..	150 0 0	Dec., 1891	Dec., 1899	26	183	0 7·57
Nelson, Motueka, Totaranui, Takaka, and Collingwood ..	125 0 0	..	Dec., 1899	52	130	0 4·44
Westport and Karamea ..	275 0 0	June, 1886	Dec., 1899	26	102	1 6·15
Westport and Little Wanganui ..		Jan., 1895	Dec., 1899	12	82	
Hokitika, Okarito, Bruce Bay, Paringa, Haast River, Okuru, Waitoto, and Jackson's Bay ..	500 0 0	Jan., 1886	Dec., 1899	6	384	4 4·08
Lyttelton and Chatham Islands ..	275 0 0	..	March, 1898	6	1,050	0 10·48
Bluff and Half-moon Bay ..	250 0 0	July, 1886	Dec., 1899	52	48	2 0·04
Bluff, Te Oneroa and Cromarty ..	345 0 0	April, 1893	March, 1899	12	208	2 9·17
Paterson's Inlet and Half-moon Bay ..	29 0 0	April, 1892	Dec., 1899	52	12	0 11·15
Half-moon Bay and Port Pegasus ..	5 0 0	June, 1894	..	10	84	0 1·43
Interprovincial service in connection with San Francisco line ..	3,000 0 0	Nov., 1886	Nov., 1897	13	..	..

MONEY-ORDERS.

Sixteen money-order offices were opened during the year—namely, Alfredton, Alton, Apiti, Greendale, Hurleyville, Mangamahu, Okaihau, Pohangina, Poroti, St. Albans, Sefton, Springston, Taueru, Upper Riccarton, Weber, Whakataki. One office—Alford Forest—was closed.

The number of offices open at the end of the year was 379, as against 364 in the previous year. 269,566 orders were issued for £902,159 15s. 7d., as compared with 243,497, for £812,604 14s. 11d., in 1895—an increase of 26,069 in number and £89,555 0s. 8d.

203,084 orders, amounting to £794,309 0s. 6d., were paid, as against 183,995, for £709,533 10s. 8d., during 1895—an increase of 19,089 orders and £84,775 9s. 10d.

The number of telegraph money-orders issued was 30,860, for £113,617 16s. 10d., as compared with 25,856, for £95,546 9s. 10d., in 1895—an increase of 5,004 orders and £18,071 7s.

88,061 orders, for £184,941 16s. 6d., were issued on the United Kingdom, Australian Colonies, and other places beyond New Zealand.

21,761 orders, for £76,389 11s. 8d., were issued at places beyond New Zealand for payment in the colony.

The commission received for money-orders amounted to £12,671 6s. 7d., as compared with £11,433 13s. 8d. received in 1895.

An arrangement has been made, which came into force on the 1st July last, for the transmission of telegraph money-orders to and from South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania, and Western Australia, upon payment of the charge for a telegram of ten words in addition to the usual rate of commission on telegraph money-orders.

A direct exchange of money-orders with Germany was arranged as from the 1st January, and a direct exchange with the Hawaiian Republic.

POSTAL NOTES.

The sale of postal notes was extended to the following offices: Alton, Ashley-Clinton, Blackburn, Chasland's, Doyleston, Fairburn's, Greendale, Hamua, Hornby, Hurleyville, Kaihu, Kaiwaka, Manapouri, Mangamahu, Ngamatapouri, Okaihau, Okura, Poroti, Purangi, Purekireki, Rahotu, Springston, Taueru, Waikino, Wakarara, Weber, Whakataki.

The offices at Kenepuru, Marohema, Tutaekara, Waihopo, and Waikawa were closed.

The number of offices at which postal notes were sold at the end of the year was 440, as compared with 418 at the end of 1895–96.

376,796 notes, of the value of £129,011 18s., were sold, as against 349,627, of the value of £123,368 6s. 6d., during the previous year.

The postal notes paid numbered 375,208, of the value of £128,655 18s. 6d., as compared with 346,510, for £122,538 14s. 6d.—an increase for the year of 28,698 in number and £6,117 4s. in value.

The postal-note commission amounted to £2,563 18s. 3d.