

The balance of revenue over expenditure was £43,980 12s. 2d., as compared with £38,417 6s. 7d. the previous year.

The estimated value of official (franked) correspondence sent by post was £72,521, and the value of Government telegrams £24,504 9s. 8d., a total of £97,025 9s. 8d. for services for which no payment was received—equal to 23.75 per cent. of the cash receipts.

Taking into account the value of the official correspondence and Government telegrams, there is a credit balance on the year's transactions of £141,006 1s. 10d.

30,260,204 letters were posted, an increase of 2,385,851.

The number of forwarded telegrams of all codes was 2,696,233, an increase of 176,064.

78 post-offices were established (including 9 reopened). The number of post-offices open at the close of the year was 1,524. It may be interesting to note that the last published international statistics placed New Zealand before all other countries in the world as regards the proportion of population to each post-office, the figures being 1 post-office for every 520 inhabitants in 1895, Canada being second with 1 to 538, New South Wales and Victoria third and fourth with 1 to 645 and 1 to 751, the United States sixth with 1 to 884, and Great Britain fifteenth with 1 to 1,922.

293,659 money-orders, for £970,830 14s. 11d., were issued, and 215,240 orders, representing £837,208 14s. 8d., paid.

409,866 postal notes, of the value of £134,378 9s. 6d., were sold.

The sum of £3,187,219 2s. 4d. was deposited in the Post-Office Savings-banks, and £2,891,169 5s. 8d. withdrawn.

The total amount to the credit of depositors on the 31st December last was £4,744,924 18s. 1d., as compared with £4,311,634 13s. 5d. at the close of the previous year.

750 inland-mail services (excluding services by railway) were in operation during the year.

At the close of the year there were 6,484 miles of telegraph-line and 18,024 miles of wire.

The net expenditure on telegraph construction was £29,384 2s. 11d.

There were 5,787 telephone-exchange connections on the 31st March last. The subscriptions received amounted to £36,422 6s. 8d.

The following table and return give the number of offices and officers of all classes on the 31st December last:—

Postal Districts.	Permanent Offices.										Non-permanent Country Offices.				Telephone Bureaux.				P.O. Clerks, Tel. Counter Clerks, Tel. Ex. Clerks and Cadettes, Cadets in P.O. Cadets not principally engaged in Tel. Operating, Tel. Despatch Clerks, Tel. Distributors.				Tel. Operators, Clerks principally engaged in Operating, Cadets principally engaged in Tel. Operating (with or without delivery of Telegrams).				Postmasters and Officers in Charge on Permanent Staff.		Letter-carriers.		Post-office Messengers (including those performing other Duties).		Telegraph Message Boys.		Linenmen (not already shown).						
	Post-offices.		Tele-graph-offices.		Combined Post- and Tele-graph-offices.		Post and Public Tele-graph.		Post and Public Telephone.		And Post.		And Public Tele-graph.		And Public Telephone.		Post-offices (no Telephone in same Town).		Post and Telephone (combined).		Post and Telephone (separate rate).		Telephone-offices (no Post-office in same Town).		Receiving Offices only.		Telephone Exchanges.		Shown in other Columns.		Not already shown.		Town.			Country.		Town.		Country.	
	Separate Telegraph in same Town.	No Telegraph in same Town.	Separate Post-office in same Town.	No Post-office in same Town.	Combined Post- and Tele-graph-offices.	Post and Public Tele-graph.	Post and Public Telephone.	And Post.	And Public Tele-graph.	And Public Telephone.	Post-offices (no Telephone in same Town).	Post and Telephone (combined).	Post and Telephone (separate rate).	Telephone-offices (no Post-office in same Town).	Receiving Offices only.	Telephone Exchanges.	Shown in other Columns.	Not already shown.	Town.	Country.	Town.	Country.	Postmasters and Officers in Charge on Permanent Staff.	Town.	Country.	Post-office Messengers (including those performing other Duties).	Town.	Country.	Telegraph Message Boys.	Linenmen (not already shown).											
	Separate Telegraph in same Town.	No Telegraph in same Town.	Separate Post-office in same Town.	No Post-office in same Town.	Combined Post- and Tele-graph-offices.	Post and Public Tele-graph.	Post and Public Telephone.	And Post.	And Public Tele-graph.	And Public Telephone.	Post-offices (no Telephone in same Town).	Post and Telephone (combined).	Post and Telephone (separate rate).	Telephone-offices (no Post-office in same Town).	Receiving Offices only.	Telephone Exchanges.	Shown in other Columns.	Not already shown.	Town.	Country.	Town.	Country.	Postmasters and Officers in Charge on Permanent Staff.	Town.	Country.	Post-office Messengers (including those performing other Duties).	Town.	Country.	Telegraph Message Boys.	Linenmen (not already shown).											
Auckland ..	1	..	1	..	23	11	7	..	1	..	178	109	2	9	6	1	26	2	90	18	39	..	44	24	7	4	24	25	13	1	2										
Blenheim ..	..	..	..	..	4	..	..	..	..	..	29	9	..	6	..	1	12	..	7	..	5	1	3	2	1	..	3	1	2	..	..										
Christchurch..	1	..	1	..	10	28	1	3	3	..	98	32	2	3	7	2	11	..	69	5	57	10	13	20	11	3	20	13	11	..	..										
Dunedin ..	1	..	1	..	17	14	2	..	2	1	70	69	3	12	2	5	51	4	65	2	40	6	19	20	7	3	24	12	6	..	..										
Gisborne ..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	11	14	..	..	..	1	10	..	9	..	1	..	1	2	..	..	4	..	1	..	..										
Greymouth ..	..	..	..	..	4	..	..	..	..	..	30	6	..	1	..	1	2	..	8	1	11	4	4	3	2	..	4	4	2	..	..										
Hokitika ..	..	..	..	..	3	..	1	..	..	..	20	13	..	2	..	..	..	2	..	2	..	3	1	1	1	2	..	1	..	..	..										
Invercargill ..	..	..	..	..	7	10	3	..	..	..	81	30	10	6	..	7	27	1	21	2	7	6	7	5	4	3	8	6	4	..	..										
Napier ..	1	..	1	..	9	3	2	..	1	..	32	24	..	1	..	2	3	..	23	1	30	10	11	4	4	1	7	5	4	..	..										
Nelson ..	..	..	..	1	4	3	..	..	..	..	18	21	1	2	..	1	..	..	8	1	8	..	6	3	..	1	5	3	1	..	..										
New Plymouth ..	..	..	..	..	4	1	..	..	..	..	22	10	2	..	..	1	7	..	10	2	4	1	4	3	1	..	4	5	3	1	..										
Oamaru ..	..	..	..	..	1	4	3	1	..	..	14	9	1	..	..	1	10	..	7	..	5	..	1	2	..	1	5	..	1	..	..										
Thames ..	..	..	..	..	9	..	..	..	..	..	26	13	..	..	1	1	7	..	9	4	9	6	9	4	3	1	6	8	3	1	..										
Timaru ..	..	..	..	..	4	11	..	..	..	..	35	4	..	..	..	1	..	..	8	..	7	2	4	3	3	1	4	3	1	..	..										
Wanganui ..	..	..	..	..	8	7	..	..	..	..	45	16	..	1	..	1	3	..	14	1	22	10	15	3	2	3	6	7	3	1	..										
Wellington ..	1	..	1	..	11	5	4	1	1	4	63	60	1	6	9	3	41	3	92	7	64	26	13	19	13	4	44	20	11	..	..										
Westport ..	..	..	..	..	3	..	2	..	..	..	13	14	..	1	..	..	..	..	5	..	3	..	3	1	..	..	3	2	1	..	..										
Totals ..	5	..	5	1	122	97	25	5	8	5	785	453	22	50	25	29	210	10	447	44	315	82	160	119	59	26	173	114	66	..	..										

COMPARATIVE RETURN of Officers of the Post and Telegraph Department for the Years 1896 and 1897.

	1896.	1897.		1896.	1897.
Postmaster-General ..	1	1	Chief Postmasters ..	16	16
Secretary ..	1	1	Postmasters and Officers in Charge on Permanent Staff ..	162	160
Superintendent of Electric Lines ..	1	1	Clerks (including Telephone Exchange Cadettes and Cadets in Post-offices) ..	862	888
Assistant Secretary and Inspector ..	1	1	Operators (including Cadets in Telephone-offices) ..	..	..
Assistant Inspectors of Post-offices ..	3	3	Country Postmasters and Telephonists ..	1,277	1,335
Controller of Money-orders and Savings-banks and Accountant ..	1	1	Letter-carriers ..	168	178
Telegraph Inspectors ..	3	3	Messengers (Post Office) ..	24	26
Telegraph Sub-Inspector ..	1	1	Linenmen ..	58	66
Electrician ..	1	1	Telegraph Message Boys ..	273	287
Mechanicians and Cadets ..	5	8	Nightwatchmen ..	2	2
Clerks in General Post Office—			Postmasters and Telegraphists or Telephonists who are Railway officers ..	138	140
Secretary's Office ..	12	12			
Inspector's and Dead-letter Branch ..	6	6			
Money-order and Savings-bank Branch ..	27	27			
Sorters in Clearing-room ..	13	16			
Storekeeper and Assistants ..	4	6			
			Totals ..	3,060	3,186