

The maximum, minimum, and average number of days within which the mails were delivered at and from London and Auckland, Wellington, Dunedin, and Bluff during 1897 by the San Francisco contract service, and by the Peninsular and Oriental and Orient lines, was :—

	San Francisco Service.			P. and O. Line.			Orient Line.		
	Max.	Min.	Average.	Max.	Min.	Average.	Max.	Min.	Average.
London to Auckland ..	34	32	32·62	47	37	40·46	53	38	42·41
Auckland to London ..	36	31	32·54	47	39	41·07	42	37	40·04
London to Wellington ..	36	33	34·23	48	38	41·27	55	39	41·56
Wellington to London ..	38	33	34·54	45	38	42·86	45	37	42·27
London to Dunedin ..	38	34	35·69	48	39	42·44	54	39	41·90
Dunedin to London ..	39	34	35·54	46	39	41·71	46	39	41·37
London to Bluff ..	39	35	36·44	47	38	41·69	53	38	41·15
Bluff to London ..	40	35	36·29	45	38	40·96	45	38	40·62

The several subsidised mail sea-services, the subsidy payments for the year 1897, the dates when established, and the date on which each terminates are shown as follows :—

Service.	Annual 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	Mar., 1899	13	11,850	0 11·88
Wellington and Vancouver ..	7,500 0 0*	Dec., 1897	Mar., 1899	13	13,320	0 10·40
Auckland and Fiji ..	1,690 0 0	June, 1890	..	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 ..	500 0 0	Jan., 1881	Dec., 1899	52	118	0 5·04
Helensville and Dargaville ..			..	104	170	
Horeke, Kohukohu, Rawene, Waitapu, and Opononi ..	148 10 0	Jan., 1889	Dec., 1899	52	48	1 2·28
Russell and Opuia ..	90 0 0	Jan., 1889	Dec., 1899	104	16	1 0·98
Whangaroa and Totara North ..	25 0 0	Jan., 1891	Dec., 1899	52	2	4 9·69
Wellington, Ketu Bay, Maud Island, Maori Bay, Homewood, and Havelock ..	180 0 0	Dec., 1891	Dec., 1899	26	183	0 9·08
Nelson, Motueka, Tataranui, Takaka, and Collingwood ..	125 0 0	..	Dec., 1899	52	130	0 4·44
Westport and Karamea ..	200 0 0	June, 1886	Dec., 1899	26	102	1 1·20
Westport and Little Wanganui ..		Jan., 1895	Dec., 1899	12	82	
Hokitika, Okarito, Bruce Bay, Paringa, Haast River, Okuru, Waitoto, and Jackson's Bay ..	600 0 0	Jan., 1886	Dec., 1899	6	384	5 2·50
Lyttelton and Chatham Islands ..	300 0 0	..	March, 1899	6	1,050	0 11·43
Bluff and Half-moon Bay ..	300 0 0	July, 1886	Dec., 1899	52	48	2 4·85
Bluff, Te Oneroa, and Cromarty ..	360 0 0	April, 1893	March, 1899	12	208	2 10·62
Interprovincial service in connection with San Francisco line ..	3,000 0 0	Nov., 1886	Nov., 1897	13	..	..

* Minimum subsidy for year, £7,500; contract service less than one month in existence on 31st December, 1897.

MONEY-ORDERS.

Eighteen money-order offices were opened during the year—namely, Cabbage Bay, Courtenay Place, Glentunnel, Hornby, Hukanui, Kaihu, Kaiwaka, Lovell's Flat, Mangaonoho, Mangatainoka, Nightcaps, Okupu, Otaihape, Paraparaumu, Te Mata, Thorpe, Waikino, Waituna West. One office—Mauku—was closed.

The number of offices open at the end of the year was 396, as against 379 twelve months previously.

293,659 orders were issued for £970,830 14s. 11d., as compared with 269,566 for £902,159 15s. 7d. in 1896—an increase of 24,093 in number, and £68,670 19s. 4d.

215,240 orders, amounting to £837,208 14s. 8d., were paid, as against 203,084 for £794,309 0s. 6d. during 1896—an increase of 12,156 orders, and £42,899 14s. 2d.

The number of telegraph money-orders issued was 33,601, for £113,584 17s. 8d., as compared with 30,860, for £113,617 16s. 10d. in 1896—an increase of 2,741 orders, but a decrease in amount of £32 19s. 2d.

99,792 orders, for £208,238 4s. 8d., were issued on the United Kingdom, Australian Colonies, and other places beyond New Zealand.

21,492 orders, for £75,343 12s. 2d., were issued at places beyond New Zealand for payment in the colony.

The commission received for money-orders amounted to £13,835 15s. 4d., as compared with £12,671 6s. 7d. received in 1896.

A direct exchange of money-orders with Fiji was arranged as from 1st March last.

POSTAL NOTES.

The sale of postal notes was extended to the following offices:—Burnett's Face, Courtenay Place, Gladstone, Glentunnel, Hukanui, Lovell's Flat, Mangaonoho, Okupu, Otaihape, Paraparaumu, Rakaunui, Tauhoa, Te Mata, Tokatea, and Te Whariki.