

The item "Stamps used for postage" is £20,000 more than last year, and includes the value of the large quantities of the new issue purchased entirely in the interests of stamp collectors.

The revenue of both branches exceeded that of the previous year by £37,386 11s. 10d., the rate of increase being 9·15 per cent.

The expenditure increased by £25,794 5s. 5d., or 7·08 per cent.

The balance of revenue over expenditure was £55,572 18s. 7d., as compared with £43,980 12s. 2d. during 1897–98.

Adding the value of the official correspondence and Government telegrams, there is a credit balance on the year's transactions of £151,803 4s. 5d.

32,465,875 letters were posted, an increase of 2,205,671.

The number of forwarded telegrams of all codes was 2,960,738, an increase of 264,505.

52 post-offices were established (including 3 reopened). The number of post-offices open at the close of the year was 1,561. The last published international statistics (1896) again 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 510 inhabitants, Canada being second with 1 to 531, New South Wales and Switzerland third and fourth with 1 to 647 and 1 to 859, the United States fifth with 1 to 897, and Great Britain twelfth with 1 to 1,906.

318,370 money-orders, for £1,029,241 7s. 7d., were issued, and 229,720 orders, representing £880,052 13s. 11d., paid.

431,449 postal notes, of the value of £139,957 4s. 0d., were sold.

The sum of £3,279,611 7s. 5d. was deposited in the Post-Office Savings-banks, and £3,194,893 16s. 7d. withdrawn.

The total amount to the credit of depositors on the 31st December last was £4,957,771 5s. 5d., as compared with £4,744,924 18s. 1d. at the close of the previous year.

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

At the close of the year there were 6,736 miles of telegraph-line and 18,746 miles of wire.

The net expenditure on telegraph construction was £28,550 14s.

There were 6,203 telephone-exchange connections on the 31st March last. The subscriptions received amounted to £39,718 7s. 7d.

STAFF.

The total number of officers on the staff on the 31st March was as under:—

	31st March, 1899.
Postmaster-General	1
Classified Staff.	
First Division	3
Clerical Division	886
Non-clerical Division	507
Distributors and Messengers	344
Total, Classified Staff	1,741
Employés not on Permanent Staff:—	
Country Postmasters	1,403
Nightwatchmen	2
Postmasters and Telegraphists or Telephonists who are Railway officers	149
Total	3,295

COMPARATIVE RETURN of OFFICERS of the Post and Telegraph Department for the Years ended 31st December, 1897, and 31st March, 1899.

	1897.	Mar. 31, 1899.		1897.	Mar. 31, 1899.
Postmaster-General	1	1	Brought forward	88	92
Secretary	1	1	Chief Postmasters	16	16
Superintendent of Electric Lines	1	1	Postmasters and Officers in Charge on Permanent Staff	113	111
Assistant Secretary and Inspector	1	1	Clerks (including Telephone Exchange)	888	917
Assistant Inspectors of Post-offices	3	3	Cadettes and Cadets in Post-offices)		
Controller of Money-orders and Savings-banks and Accountant	1	1	Operators (including Cadets in Telegraph-offices)	178	184
Telegraph Inspectors	3	3	Letter-carriers	26	38
Telegraph Sub-Inspector	1	1	Messengers (Post Office)	66	66
Electrician	1	1	Linemen	287	317
Assistant Electrician	1	1	Telegraph Message Boys	2	2
Mechanicians and Cadets	8	7	Nightwatchmen	140	149
Clerks in General Post Office—			Postmasters and Telegraphists or Telephonists who are Railway officers	1,335	1,403
Secretary's Office	12	13	Country Postmasters and Telephonists		
Inspector's and Dead-letter Branch	6	6			
Money-order and Savings-bank Branch	27	32			
Sorters in Clearing-room	16	14			
Storekeeper and Assistants	6	6			
Carried forward	88	92	Totals	3,189	3,295

HEALTH OF STAFF.

An unusual amount of sickness was experienced during the year, and the average absence was consequently high. The severe epidemic of measles affected the staff of nearly every office. The usual table is given hereunder:—