

The following table shows the number and weight of parcels exchanged with the United Kingdom and the under-mentioned places during the years 1899 and 1900 :—

Country.	Received.				Despatched.			
	1899.		1900.		1899.		1900.	
	Number.	Weight.	Number.	Weight.	Number.	Weight.	Number.	Weight.
		lb. oz.		lb. oz.		lb. oz.		lb. oz.
United Kingdom and foreign countries (<i>via</i> London)	19,719	68,628 0	21,682	76,132 0	4,524	10,128 5	4,690	9,769 0
United States	..	..	898	2,242 0	..	..	395	1,021 7
Hawaii	56	115 4½	24	40 13	24	62 3	14	25 6
Vancouver	132	178 0	147	236 5	67	139 0	89	145 0
Victoria	3,235	11,076 0	3,540	12,849 8	1,346	2,771 13	1,322	3,033 12
New South Wales ..	5,691	16,097 8	6,229	17,629 8	1,975	5,714 1	1,809	4,774 0½
South Australia ..	258	779 15	244	715 4	194	527 13	191	526 8
Queensland	327	712 12	308	631 8	293	748 0	267	659 14
Tasmania	152	434 11	143	406 2	315	712 3	312	746 3
Western Australia ..	244	538 0	260	756 0	266	739 13	262	689 2
Samoa	14	62 11	15	94 7	213	667 3	128	415 13
Rarotonga	10	15 0	19	45 3	70	220 5	65	257 15
Fiji	29	60 13	36	95 1	109	324 11	139	447 1
Norfolk Island ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	5 8
Ceylon	340	739 15	382	864 15½	166	379 1	165	372 7½
Uruguay	..	..	..	..	14	54 0	15	27 5
Cape Colony	..	..	309	590 8	..	..	707	1,400 1½
Transvaal	..	..	..	..	..	..	345	681 12
Totals	30,207	99,438 9½	34,236	113,332 2¾	9,576	23,188 7	10,916	24,998 3½

The declared value of parcels received from places outside the colony in 1900 was £87,662. The Customs duty collected amounted to £16,642 lls. 6d.

The declared value of parcels despatched to places beyond the colony was £11,800, as against £10,806 in 1899.

On the 1st February, 1900, a direct exchange of parcels was established with Cape Colony, and also with the other South African Colonies *via* Capetown. This service has been much used and appreciated by those having friends and relatives serving in the several New Zealand Contingents during the war.

The direct parcel exchange inaugurated with the United States of America on the 1st July, 1900, has already assumed considerable proportions. In the eleven months ended 31st May, 707 parcels were despatched to, and 1899 parcels received from, that country.

On the 1st January, 1901, a substantial reduction was made in the rates of postage on parcels to the United Kingdom.

The new rates are arranged in three stages only, as follows: For a parcel not exceeding 3 lb., 1s.; over 3 lb. but not over 7 lb., 2s.; over 7 lb. but not over 11 lb., 3s.: as against the former rates of 1s. for the first pound and 6d. for each succeeding pound.

This system of dividing the postages on parcels into three stages is termed the three-step scale, and also applies to parcels addressed to a number of British possessions and foreign countries sent by way of London. Efforts are being made to extend the three-step scale to as many countries as possible, in order to eventually secure uniformity of system in parcel-post rates combined with the lowest possible charges to the public.

OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

The estimated volume and value of official and other free correspondence posted during 1900 is given in the statement below :—

District.	Letters.	Packets.	Registered Articles.	Newspapers.	Postage Value of Official Correspondence.
					£
Auckland	274,937	15,408	11,949	67,377	6,690
Thames	51,167	3,149	1,666	20,762	1,388
New Plymouth ..	116,821	15,200	1,800	33,500	3,028
Gisborne	19,448	1,482	806	11,140	594
Napier	116,984	9,756	2,208	53,836	3,307
Wanganui	321,893	17,616	4,304	91,695	7,883
Wellington	944,420	128,120	32,110	130,400	22,353
Nelson	79,222	6,240	6,062	41,496	2,407
Westport	26,530	250	1,000	21,910	898
Greymouth	75,803	3,219	1,867	39,294	2,174
Hokitika	23,936	2,610	1,582	13,936	760
Blenheim	59,410	2,600	600	22,000	1,531
Christchurch ..	325,020	19,890	12,250	109,990	8,455
Timaru	75,491	3,200	2,481	32,000	2,047
Oamaru	47,216	1,820	1,467	34,268	1,533
Dunedin	338,516	40,304	5,328	188,476	10,361
Invercargill ..	288,730	12,324	4,419	71,919	6,829
Totals	3,185,544	283,188	91,899	983,999	£82,238