

INLAND MAILS.

The general contracts for inland mail-services would in the ordinary course expire at the end of this year. In view, however, of the great inconvenience caused by the services terminating so near the time of the parliamentary election, the Postmaster-General has decided to extend as many of the contracts as possible for one year, so that future lettings will not fall into the same year as the general election. The majority of the contractors has decided to accept the Department's offer of renewal on existing terms.

A steam service from Wanganui to Pipiriki, in addition to that carried out by Messrs. Hatrick and Co., has been arranged with the Wanganui Settlers River Steamship Company.

To meet the growing requirements of the Auckland District a railway travelling post-office was established as from the 19th May last. As at present arranged the sorting-vans run to and from Auckland and Hamilton. The vans cross at Mercer, where the sorting clerks exchange.

The number of contracts for inland mails in operation in 1901 was 648.

There are in addition 419 services not under bond.

The length of inland postal routes by road (counted one way only) was 10,310 miles, and the total number of miles travelled 2,518,094, at an average cost of 3·37d. per mile. In 1900 the respective mileages were 10,137 and 2,510,152, and the average cost 3·26d. per mile.

Ordinary railway-trains with mails travelled 2,982,764 miles.

The estimated sum payable to the Railway Department for the conveyance of mails by ordinary trains was £40,847 7s.

INLAND MAIL-SERVICES.

The following services were established during the year :—

Auckland—

As required : Big Omaha Post-office-steamers.

Daily : Fencourt Post-office-Railway-station.

Thrice weekly : Porotarao Post-office-train.

Twice weekly : Oparau-Kawhia Road ; Towai-Ruapekapeka.

Weekly : Amodeo Bay Post-office-steamer ; Hukerenui-Paiaka : Hukerenui-Riponui ; Kawhia-Hauturu ; Kawakawa-Opua ; Russell-Opua.

Blenheim—

Weekly : Blenheim-Seddon (continued).

Dunedin—

Daily : Hayward's Point-Purakanui ; Wedderburn Post-office-Railway-station.

Thrice weekly : Idaburn-Ophir-Chatto Creek-Alexandra South : Milton-Money-mere ; Patearoa-Waipia ; Rough Ridge-Idaburn ; Waiwera South-Ashley Downs-Taumata-Clydevale.

Twice weekly : Waipia-Hamilton South (re-established).

Weekly : Patearoa-Paerau.

Gisborne—

Twice weekly during eight months of year, weekly four winter months : Te Karaka-Kanakanae ; Patutahi-Ngatapa.

Weekly : Ngatapa-Wharekopae ; Port Awanui-Kahukura (re-established).

Invercargill—

Twice daily : Ocean Beach Post-office-Railway-siding.

Twice weekly : Wild Bush-Main Road.

Weekly : Mossburn-Matuku.

Monthly : Te Oneroa-Cromarty (continuation).

Napier—

Daily : Maharahara East Post-office-Oringi Railway-station ; Napier-Pakowhai.

Weekly : Dannevirke-Weber (while coach runs : service resumed) ; Petane-Te Kuta ; Putere-Wahanui.

Nelson—

As required : Port Wharf-vessels in roadstead.

Thrice weekly : Ngatimote-Orinoco.

New Plymouth—

Daily : Midhirst-Stanley Road.

Thames—

As required : Paeroa Post-office-Te Puke Wharf.

Thrice weekly : Paeroa-Netherton ; Omokoroa-Junction on Tauranga Road.

Twice weekly : Omahu-Cryer's Landing.

Fortnightly : Raukokore-Cape Runaway-Hicks Bay.

Timaru—

Twice weekly : Fairlie, round service in Raincliff district (rural delivery).

Wanganui—

Daily : Hawera-Manaia (making a twice-daily mail) ; Mokoia Railway-station-Whakamara (new office)-Meremere-Ohangai (new office) ; Te Roti-Matapu.

Twice weekly : Patea-Maben Road ; Wanganui-Makirikiri-Koriniti-Jerusalem-Pipiriki (in addition to existing service).

Weekly : Pipiriki-Putikituna (extension provided for in Wanganui-Pipiriki contract) ; Wanganui-Koriniti-Jerusalem-Pipiriki (1st May-31st October ; winter service resumed under agreement up to 24th May for 1901, and extended to correspond with previous winter periods).