

Books and pattern-packets—			
Posted in the colony	..	17,613,689	16,870,951
Received from places outside the colony ..	..	1,954,045	1,755,373
		<u>19,567,734</u>	<u>18,626,324</u>
			941,410
Newspapers—			
Posted in the colony	..	14,107,523	13,392,847
Received from places outside the colony ..	..	5,588,911	5,124,429
		<u>19,696,434</u>	<u>18,517,276</u>
			1,179,158
Parcels—			
Posted in the colony	..	267,974	244,016
Received from places outside the colony ..	..	59,655	47,654
		<u>327,629</u>	<u>291,670</u>
			35,959

The letters increased 6·74, letter-cards 14·57, post-cards 11·62, books and pattern-packets 5·05, newspapers 6·37, and parcels 12·33 per cent.

In 1902 letters increased 9·98, letter-cards increased 0·2, post-cards decreased 14·46, books and pattern-packets increased 4·64, newspapers decreased 2·41, and parcels increased 6·67 per cent.

The average number of letters posted per head of population was estimated to be 68·94, or 70·38 including letter-cards. The averages in 1902 were 66·78, or 68·07 including letter-cards.

The Post Office receipts for the year amounted to £343,206 19s. 6d., an increase of 13·42 per cent.

The expenditure was £270,883 13s. 3d., an increase of 4·41 per cent.

The balance of postal revenue over expenditure was £72,323 6s. 3d. The estimated value of the free official correspondence of other Government Departments was £88,742 14s. 11d. The gross earnings of the Post Office for the year were therefore £431,949 14s. 5d., and the credit balance £161,066 1s. 2d.

WORK PERFORMED FOR OTHER DEPARTMENTS.

Such work forms a steadily increasing factor of the Department's business, ever widening in its scope and usefulness to the public. A glance at the Post Office Account balance-sheet (Table 6) will give some idea of the very many matters, both great and small, with which the Department deals, matters which not only involve the bare transaction of the business in question, but also require no inconsiderable knowledge of the law, regulation, order, or system under which the money is either collected or paid out. To quote a few principal items:—

Customs duties were collected on parcels and other articles coming through the post from places beyond the colony amounting to £32,739 8s. 5d., and on account of ordinary Customs work £2,783 17s. 11d.

The Advances to Settlers receipts amounted to £666,337 18s. 2d., and payments to £663,640 17s. 10d.

Fishing licenses were issued by Postmasters to the value of £981 17s., and game licenses to the value of £2,108 14s.

For the Government Insurance Department premiums were collected from the public amounting to £26,655 4s. 8d.

Publications sent out by the Government Printer and paid for through the Post Office brought in £464 6s.

Income-tax amounting to £122,963 10s. 1d., and land-tax, £243,031 7s. 8d. were collected by Postmasters.

The sum of £5,711 2s. 6d., fees due to the Machinery Department, was received.

Under the Mining Act the receipts were £311 10s.

New Zealand Consols for £2,605 were sold on behalf of the Treasury.

£2,916 15s. 1d., was the amount paid for Official Assignees as dividends in bankrupt estates.

The amount paid to old-age pensioners through the Post Office was £223,319 5s. 5d.

On behalf of the Public Trustee £392,107 10s. was received, and £383,752 19s. 10d. paid.

Railway revenue amounting to £9,653 2s. 1d. was collected by Postmasters.

Fees for the registration of births, deaths, and marriages received by Postmaster-Registrars were £2,145 12s. 9d.

Receipts from the Hanmer Plains Sanatorium amounted to £2,141 19s. 2d.

Sheep rates amounting to £20,033 16s. 7d., and £41 4s. 5d. sundry amounts, were collected for the Stock Department.

On behalf of the Tourist Department £780 17s. 10d. was received.

Valuation Department fees paid to Postmasters reached £2,456 3s. 11d.

Claims on the General Government for £636,913 1s. were paid on behalf of the Treasury.

Discount-stamps numbering 2,737,680, for £2,851 15s., were sold, and 2,501,712, for £2,605 19s., redeemed, during the year.

Early in the year the Government decided to make use of the Post Office as a medium for the sale of Treasury 4-per-cent. debentures. The debentures are issued to the public in denominations of £25, £50, £100, £500, and £1,000. Interest is payable half-yearly. The increased facilities offered for investment of comparatively small sums of money have already resulted in the receipt of £54,275 within a period of about three months.