

1908.
NEW ZEALAND.

POST AND TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT

(REPORT OF THE) FOR THE YEAR 1907.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

General Post Office,
Wellington, 22nd June, 1908.

MY LORD,—

I have the honour to submit to Your Excellency the Report of the Post and Telegraph Department for the year 1907, and to offer the following introductory remarks :—

The Department, in keeping with its established policy, has endeavoured in every way to meet the requirements of the public not only by providing increased facilities, but also by reducing charges wherever the volume of business or circumstances justified such a course.

Looking back over the last decade of the nineteenth century and the portion already elapsed of the first of the twentieth, it is with satisfaction that attention may be called to the outstanding results of this policy.

The public have become so accustomed to penny postage, sixpenny telegrams, and cheap means of remitting money, that few realise the advantages now obtained compared with the conditions existing but a few years ago.

Were the 1891 rates in vogue at present the postages on the mail matter of all kinds carried by the Department would have amounted to £676,136, instead of £441,776 actually received; ordinary paid telegrams would have cost £325,287, instead of £201,724; and exchange subscribers would have paid £146,085, in place of £116,853. Thus, on these main items alone the public last year saved £387,155, a very considerable item on the total of £760,353 which it expended.

Reduced rates, however, invariably mean increased business. Letters and other mail matter dealt with last year numbered 125,418,080, compared with 81,122,620 in 1901, and 37,650,551 in 1891—the percentage of increase in these cases being 54 over 1901 and 233 over 1891.

Telegrams show an even greater proportional advance. From 1,968,264 in 1891 they rose to 4,167,981 in 1901, and to 7,042,923 in the year just closed, which therefore exceeded 1901 by 69 and 1891 by 258 per cent.

So great an increase in business of course necessitated the employment of many additional officers. The permanent staff, which in 1891 numbered 1,409, had to be increased to 2,245 in 1901, and to 3,147 in 1907. These figures show that the increase in staff has been at less than half the rate per cent. of the increase in the work. It follows that officers have their hours of duty fully occupied.

With such marked increase in both business and staff, combined with equally marked decrease in rates, the question as to the effect upon the revenue and expenditure naturally arises.

The revenue has increased from £320,058 in 1891 to £488,573 in 1901, and £822,639 in the year just closed, while the expenditure for the same periods amounted to £268,343, £465,756, and £709,025 respectively—that is to say, that whereas the revenue, with smaller charges for work performed, has increased since 1891 by 157 per cent., the expenditure, with the greatly increased staff and other facilities required, has increased 164 per cent., a result which may be regarded as highly satisfactory. From another point of view, in 1907, with penny postage, half-penny-a-word telegrams, and reduced telephone, money-order, and postal-note charges, the percentage of total expenditure to total receipts was 86·19, as against 83·84 in 1891, an increase of only 2·35 per cent., notwithstanding that rates of postage and charges for telegrams have been reduced by over 50 per cent. all round.

Taking into consideration the total salaries paid, the results are even more remarkable. In 1891 the proportion of salaries to total expenditure was 58·62 per cent., while in the past year it was 59·06 per cent., an increased ratio of only 0·44, or less than one-half per cent.