

1909.
NEW ZEALAND.

POST, TELEGRAPH, AND TELEPHONE BUSINESS IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

(REPORT OF SECRETARY POST AND TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT, ON).

Laid on the Table of the House by leave.

REPORT.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 24th September, 1909.

In obedience to your instructions, I visited the principal post, telegraph, and telephone offices in Europe, the United States, and Canada during my recent absence from New Zealand. I now have the honour to submit a report showing the result of my investigations. I have not referred specially to any differences in practice which did not appear to me to give a better result than our own, but have confined myself as far as possible to the question of economy in working combined with the provision of maximum facilities to the public.

If the proposals recommended in my report are carried out, there should be an annual saving to the Department of, approximately, £10,000 per annum, which I trust will be regarded as satisfactory. The greater part of this saving would be definite—that is to say, the staff could be reduced immediately the new system comes into operation. With the rapid extension of the Department, however, it should be possible to employ most of the displaced officers at other duties within a comparatively short space of time.

I would add that at all the offices I visited I was shown the greatest courtesy, the principal officers not only of Government Departments, but of private companies, devoting to my inquiries much more time and attention than I had any right to expect. It was a pleasure to find that the forward policy of the Postmaster-General and the methods of the New Zealand Post and Telegraph Department were favourably mentioned in quarters where I least expected them to be known.

I have, &c.,

D. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

The Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward, P.C., K.C.M.G., Postmaster-General, Wellington.

POST-OFFICE BUILDINGS.

I examined a large number of buildings in various countries. In hardly two cases did I find the arrangements for the convenience of the public or the officers alike, the process of arriving at a satisfactory arrangement being apparently subject to the views of the designer. The main point noticeable is, that in America and some other countries, the principle of the wicket—a small square window opening out on to a corridor—is adopted in preference to the open counter. In Great Britain and France the open counter is found in all principal offices, and, as this has proved so successful in New Zealand, I see no reason for recommending any alteration of the system. I was pleased to find that the plans of the Auckland and Wellington offices, which were prepared before I left New Zealand, are, as the result of my inquiries, susceptible of little alteration. Several mechanical appliances, such as conveyers, &c., can with advantage be added, but this, of course, does not affect the general arrangement of the accommodation to be provided in the new buildings. I have referred to conveyers elsewhere.

BACK-STAMPING OF LETTERS.

For some time I have been of opinion that the back-stamping of letters, at any rate at the principal offices, was an unnecessary formality. With the despatch of mails two or three times daily from offices near at hand, and practically daily from one end of the country to the other, the time of posting of a letter as shown on its face is sufficient proof that it should have been received at a certain time. To mark the time of receipt may be a matter of interest to one person