

EIGHTH REPORT
ON
THE POSTAL SERVICE OF NEW ZEALAND,
BY THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 28th July, 1867.

I have the honor to submit to your Excellency the Eighth Report on the Postal Service of New Zealand, being that for the year ended 31st December, 1866.

To His Excellency Sir George Grey, K.C.B.,
Governor of New Zealand.

JOHN HALL,
Postmaster-General.

REPORT.

DURING the year 1866 and the first half of the year 1867, several important changes have taken place in the Postal Service of New Zealand. The mail communication with Great Britain *via* Panama has been successfully inaugurated. Post Office Savings' Banks have been commenced, with every prospect of success. The rates of inland postage have been amended by an Act of the Legislature, and by the same authority a charge has been imposed for the conveyance of newspapers through the Post. A Conference of Delegates from the several Australian Colonies, held in Melbourne, has agreed upon a scheme of Ocean Postal Communication, which, if acceded to by the Imperial Government, will, I have no doubt, produce important and beneficent results.

DEPARTMENTAL.

With the exception of certain changes hereafter described, which have been rendered necessary by the introduction of the Post Office Savings' Bank system, no material alteration in the arrangements of the Department have been made during the past year. The amount of business transacted through the medium of the various Post Offices must be considered satisfactory when it is borne in mind that a considerable body of Imperial Troops has been removed from the Colony during the twelvemonths.

The letters despatched have been 2,353,856 in 1866 (see table No. 20), against 2,235,188 in 1865.

The letters received have been 2,404,788 in 1866 (see table No. 19), against 2,208,285 in 1865.

The newspapers despatched have been 2,413,511 in 1866 (see table No. 22), against 1,923,544 in 1865.

The newspapers received have been 1,959,528 in 1866 (see table No. 21), against 1,474,134 in 1865.

The Postal revenue (exclusive of money order commission) has been £47,836 10s. 6d. in 1866 (see table No. 32), against £46,475 9s. 3d. in 1865.

The Postal expenditure, exclusive of steam subsidies, has been £62,927 4s. 6d., in 1866—including £7,300 expended on buildings—(see table No. 32), against £55,641 6s. 3d., in 1865.

Twelve new offices have been opened during the year, and four offices have been closed. The total number of the Postal staff is shown by the subjoined table.

NUMBER of POST OFFICES and POSTAL OFFICERS during the years 1863, 1864, 1865, and 1866.

OFFICERS.	CHIEF POST OFFICES.				POST OFFICES.				SUB POST OFFICES.			
	1863.	1864.	1865.	1866.	1863.	1864.	1865.	1866.	1863.	1864.	1865.	1866.
Postmasters	9	9	9	9	10	12	16	17	257	274	299	306
Clerks, &c.	78	77	76	68	7	7	10	12
TOTALS	87	86	85	77	17	19	26	29	257	274	299	306

It will be seen that a reduction has been effected in the staff of some of the chief Post Offices. The occurrence of every vacancy in the Department, has, moreover, been made the occasion, when practicable, of affording promotion to officers who have distinguished themselves by intelligence and zeal. I trust that this system will be continued. Nothing tends more to promote zealous and efficient service on the part of officers of the Department than an assurance that such services are not overlooked, but will eventually lead to the promotion of the persons by whom they are rendered.

Several of the Post Offices throughout the Colony have been visited by the Inspector during the past year. The demands, however, which have been made upon his time for carrying out the several alterations rendered necessary by the commencement of the Panama Mail Service, and for maturing various important improvements in the Postal Service of the Colony, have rendered it impossible for him to devote as much time to the performance of the duty of inspecting the various branches of the Department as I could have wished. Nothing contributes more to the regular and efficient conduct of a Postal Service than a frequent inspection of the whole of its branches by an experienced and trustworthy Inspector. The high character for efficiency maintained by the Post Office in the United Kingdom, is owing, in a very great measure, to the liberal provision which is made for a constant and efficient inspection of every part of it. The New Zealand Inspector is an excellent officer, but it is not possible for him unassisted to visit all the offices throughout the Colony, except at rare intervals. To remedy this evil, I have in some cases authorized Chief Postmasters to inspect several of their sub-offices, but this remedy is not an effectual one. An addition to the Inspecting Staff of the Department would be a wise and prudent economy.