

The withdrawals from the Post-Office Savings-Banks for the year exceeded the deposits by £117,245 14s. 2d. In 1882 the deposits exceeded the withdrawals by £183,253 2s. 10d. The unusually large excess of withdrawals in 1883 was not, it is believed, caused by trade depression, but from the fact that more profitable investments were to be obtained in other quarters. Reference to the table of classified balances on page 9 would seem to confirm this, as it is shown that by far the greater number of the withdrawals were made by depositors who had balances at their credit of £200 and upwards. The number of deposits made by those who may be regarded as the wages class shows a very substantial increase, and this tends to confirm the belief that this class of depositors had not to any extent to draw out their "savings" to meet current expenses.

The Department has had under consideration for some time the question of establishing a parcels post. It was hoped that the Imperial Post Office authorities might extend the operations of the scheme recently introduced in the United Kingdom to the Australasian Colonies, but this it appears is not to be done. A Bill has already been prepared, and will be submitted to Parliament, empowering the Postmaster-General to establish inland and foreign parcels posts.

POST OFFICE.

The number of letters, post-cards, book-packets and pattern-parcels, and newspapers delivered and posted during the calendar year, compared with the number recorded for 1882, was as under:—

		1883.	1882.	Increase.
Letters—Delivered	17,768,357	15,526,719	
Posted	15,820,051	14,998,860	
		<u>33,588,408</u>	<u>30,525,579</u>	<u>3,062,829</u>
Post-cards—Delivered	539,682	418,477	
Posted	574,717	540,618	
		<u>1,114,399</u>	<u>959,095</u>	<u>155,304</u>
Books and parcels—Delivered	1,197,521	1,087,584	
Posted	1,321,363	1,308,671	
		<u>2,518,884</u>	<u>2,396,255</u>	<u>122,629</u>
Newspapers—Delivered	6,911,203	7,357,473	Decrease.
Posted	6,119,360	5,955,626	
		<u>13,030,563</u>	<u>13,313,099</u>	<u>282,536</u>

The letters increased 10·03 per cent.; post-cards, 16·19; books and parcels, 5·12. The newspapers decreased 2·12 per cent.

The average number of letters posted by each person was estimated to be 29·25; in 1882 the estimate was 28·97.

The receipts for the financial year ended 31st March last were £176,682 8s. 9d., an increase of £4,683 14s. 10d., or 2·73 per cent. Stamps, it was estimated, increased by £2,000, money-order commission collected within the colony by £984 8s. 6d., private box and bag fees by £220 18s. 10d., and miscellaneous receipts by £5,124 1s. 9d. The postage received from foreign post offices was £3,678 11s. 11d. less than that for the previous year.

The expenditure on postal services was £158,200 0s. 8d., against £151,837 16s. 8d. for 1882, an increase of 4·19 per cent. The expenditure, however, was £18,482 8s. 1d. less than the revenue.

The estimated value of the free official correspondence was £75,596 2s. 7d.

The gross earnings of the Post Office, inclusive of £75,596 2s. 7d., the estimated value of the official postage, amounted to £252,278 11s. 4d., leaving an apparent surplus of £94,078 10s. 8d. on the year's business.

The sum of £262,375 16s. 5d., in 35,876 payments, was collected at post offices on account of the Property-Tax.

Payments to boarding-out patients, maintained under "The Industrial Schools Act, 1882," are now made direct to the claimants through the agency of post offices—an arrangement which has the merit of being convenient and economical, and which might be extended with considerable advantage to the public service.

5,339,874 letters, 173,216 post-cards, 221,454 books and parcels, and 1,489,304 newspapers were delivered by letter-carriers during the year—a very considerable increase over the deliveries made the previous year.

A number of extensions and alterations to the letter-carriers' deliveries were made during the year.

Deliveries were established at Cambridge, Devonport, Hamilton, Hawera, Patea, Palmerston North, Masterton, Ross, Temuka, Milton, Gore, and Gordon.

The deliveries at Blenheim and Westport were rearranged.

The Invercargill deliveries now include the suburbs of Georgetown, Kew, and Richmond Grove.

The deliveries at Tauranga, Gisborne, Oamaru, and Dunedin have been extended.

Papanui is now included within the Christchurch delivery; and at New Plymouth the delivery has been extended over the whole of the town.

An additional delivery was established at Temuka, and also one in the business part of Wellington. The 4 p.m. delivery at Greymouth, and the midday one at Invercargill, were abolished.

30 additional receivers were erected during the year: 6 in Auckland City and suburbs, 1 at Onehunga, 1 at Helensville South, 1 at Gisborne, 1 at Feilding, 1 in Wellington City, 6 in Christchurch City and suburbs, 1 at Winchester, 1 at Temuka, 1 at Arowhenua, 1 in Invercargill, 1 at Picton, 2 in Nelson City, 1 at Timaru, 1 at Wanganui, 1 at Taylorville, 1 at Wallsend, 1 at Gordon, and 1 at Springston.