

The average value of each bureau message was 5·67d., as against 5·93d. in 1894–95.

The number of Government telegrams forwarded was 224,579, of the value of £25,843 11s. 11d., as compared with 231,618, valued at £26,050 7s. 5d.—a decrease of 7,039 in number and £206 15s. 6d. in value.

25,856 money-orders, for £95,546 9s. 10d., were transmitted by telegraph, as against 22,721, for £82,148 9s. 6d., forwarded in 1894–95—an increase of 3,135 messages, or 13·8 per cent.

The number of forwarded telegrams to every hundred letters posted in the colony for delivery within the colony was 8·38, which was also the proportion for the previous year.

The telegraph cash receipts for the financial year (including telephone-exchange subscriptions, private-wire rents, &c.) amounted to £123,112 6s. 9d., compared with £110,012 3s. 9d. in 1894–95—an increase of £13,100 3s., or 11·91 per cent.

The expenditure was £143,665 14s., as compared with £135,791 0s. 7d. the former year—an increase of £7,874 13s. 5d., or 5·8 per cent.

The credit balance for the year, after taking into account the value of Government telegrams, &c., was £5,290 4s. 8d.

61 knots of single-core cable were laid. The length of the single-core cables is now 209 knots.

There were 6,245 miles of line and 15,764 miles of wire at the close of the year, an increase of 184 and 883 miles respectively.

The net expenditure out of loan for telegraph extension was £35,537 15s. 2d., as compared with £19,228 19s. in 1894–95.

The number of private wires and subsidised lines was 115, compared with 123 in 1894–95. The amount received for rent, maintenance, &c., was £971 6s. 9d., as against £1,278 6s. 8d. in 1894–95.

The Taupiri and Sanson offices were converted from Morse to telephone, and Waihi from telephone to Morse.

Twenty-two bureau offices were opened and one closed during the year. The total number of telegraph- and telephone-offices open at close of the year was 743. Of these, 233 were telegraph, and 510 telephone, offices. Thirty-eight telephone-offices were opened, and one closed. The offices opened were,—

Albert Town.	Linwood.	Robin Hood Bay.
Apiti.	Luggate.	Rock and Pillar.
Babylon.	Makakahi.	St. Albans.
Bennett's	Mangatera.	St. Clair.
Cape Maria Van Diemen.	Maropiu.	Tamahere.
Closeburn.	Maxwelltown.	Tapanui Railway.
Driving Creek.	Newman.	Tutaekara.
Eskdale.	Ocean Bay.	Upper Queen Street.
Flaxbourne.	Ogilvie's.	Waitekauri.
Hohoura.	Parenga.	Waituna West.
Hurleyville.	Pohangina.	Whakataki.
Kaihu.	Pohui.	Woolston.
Kiripaka.	Raumai.	

One telegraph-office was closed, namely, White's Bay; and one telephone-office, namely, Mornington.

#### TELEPHONE EXCHANGES.

There were, on the 31st March last, 16 central exchanges and 10 sub-exchanges, a total of 26.

The following table gives the number of subscribers or connections for 1895–96 and 1894–95 respectively:—

Exchange.	No. of Subscribers or Connections:	
	Mar. 31, 1896.	Mar. 31, 1895.
Ashburton	80	...
Auckland	938	811
Blenheim	64	58
Christchurch	849	814
Dunedin	859	819
Balclutha	19	19
Milton	14	14
Port Chalmers	17	16
Greymouth	65	65
Invercargill	216	205
Bluff	20	20
Gore	48	49
Mataura	8	9
Riversdale	14	13
Winton	9	9
Woodlands	8	7
Napier	275	249
Nelson	61	61
New Plymouth	100	...
Oamaru	87	84
Palmerston North	81	79
Thames	78	74
Timaru	73	70
Wanganui	118	107
Wellington	1,041	963
Hutt	1	1
Total	5,143	4,616