

The net expenditure on telegraph construction was £36,791 8s. 11d.

269,566 money-orders, for £902,159 15s. 7d., were issued, and 203,084 orders, amounting to £794,309 0s. 6d., paid.

376,796 postal notes, for £129,011 18s., were sold.

The amount deposited in the Post-Office Savings-banks was £2,881,152 16s. 3d., and the sum withdrawn, £2,591,558 19s. 4d.

The total sum to the credit of depositors at the close of the calendar year was £4,311,634 13s. 5d., as compared with £3,895,543 0s. 3d. on 31st December, 1895.

There were 5,747 telephone-exchange connections on the 31st March last, a net increase of 604. The subscriptions received amounted to £29,248 19s. 5d.

The following table and return give the number of offices and officers of all classes on the 31st December last :—

Postal Districts.	Permanent Offices.										Non-permanent Country Offices.				Telephone Bureaux.		Telephone Exchanges.				P.O. Clerks, Tel. Counter Clerks, Tel. Ex. Clerks and Cadettes, Cadets in P.O. Cadets not principally engaged in Tel. Operating, Tel. Despatch Clerks, Tel. Distributors.				Tel. Operators, Clerks principally engaged in Operating, Cadets principally engaged in Tel. Operating (with or without delivery of Telegrams).				Postmasters and Officers in Charge on Permanent Staff.		Letter-carriers.		Telegraph Messengers.		Linenmen (not already shown).
	Post-offices.		Tele-graph-offices.		Tele-graph-offices.		Combined Railway		Post and Public Tele-graph.	Post and Public Telephone.	And Post.	And Public Tele-graph.	And Public Tele-phone.	Post-offices (no Telephone in same town).	Post and Telephone (combined).	Post and Telephone (separate).	Telephone-offices (no Post-office in same town).	Receiving Offices only.	Telephone Exchanges.	Shown in other Columns.	Not already shown.	Town.	Country.	Town.	Country.	Postmasters and Officers in Charge on Permanent Staff.	Town.	Country.	Post-office Messengers (including those performing other duties).	Town.	Country.				
	Separate Telegraph in same town.	No Telegraph in same town.	Separate Post-office in same town.	No Post-office in same town.	Combined Post- and Tele-graph-offices.	Post and Public Tele-graph.	Post and Public Telephone.	And Post.																								And Public Tele-graph.	And Public Tele-phone.		
Auckland ..	1	..	1	..	23	12	5	..	1	..	182	99	3	7	5	1	22	2	78	16	50	..	44	21	7	4	24	22	12						
Blenheim ..	..	..	..	..	6	..	..	..	..	..	23	7	1	5	..	1	12	..	7	..	5	2	6	2	1	..	2	2	3
Christchurch..	1	..	1	..	10	28	1	3	3	..	102	27	2	2	7	2	11	..	54	5	70	9	12	19	9	3	20	9	5						
Dunedin ..	1	..	1	..	17	14	2	..	2	1	68	67	3	12	2	5	36	1	58	2	46	6	19	19	7	2	24	11	6						
Gisborne ..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	11	14	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	6	..	1	2	..	..	5	..	1
Greymouth ..	..	..	..	..	4	..	..	..	..	..	30	6	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	16	7	4	2	2	..	4	4	2
Hokitika ..	..	..	..	..	3	..	1	..	..	..	20	13	..	2	..	..	..	..	1	..	4	..	3	1	1	1	2	..	1
Invercargill ..	..	..	..	..	7	10	3	..	..	..	81	29	8	6	..	7	28	1	18	2	11	6	7	5	4	3	8	6	4
Napier ..	1	..	1	..	9	3	2	..	1	..	31	22	..	1	..	2	3	..	20	1	31	10	11	4	4	1	6	5	4						
Nelson ..	..	..	1	..	4	3	..	..	..	..	17	22	..	2	..	1	..	..	7	1	11	..	6	3	..	1	5	1	1
New Plymouth ..	..	..	..	..	4	1	..	..	..	..	22	9	2	..	..	1	6	..	7	2	6	1	4	3	1	..	4	4	1
Oamaru ..	..	..	..	..	1	4	3	1	..	..	12	9	..	1	..	1	10	..	6	..	7	..	1	2	..	1	4	..	1
Thames ..	..	..	..	..	9	..	..	..	..	..	22	12	..	..	1	1	7	..	2	4	15	6	8	3	3	1	5	5	3
Timaru ..	..	..	..	..	4	11	..	..	1	..	32	4	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	8	2	4	3	3	1	4	3	1
Wanganui ..	..	..	..	..	7	6	1	..	..	..	41	16	..	1	..	1	3	..	6	1	27	10	15	3	2	3	6	7	3
Wellington ..	1	..	1	..	11	5	2	1	2	3	63	54	1	6	2	3	34	4	69	7	78	22	14	18	13	3	49	17	9						
Westport ..	..	..	..	..	3	..	2	..	..	..	13	14	..	1	..	..	..	..	2	..	6	..	3	1	..	..	3	2	1
Totals ..	5	..	5	1	123	97	22	5	10	4	770	424	20	46	17	28	172	8	338	41	397	81	162	111	57	24	175	98	58						

COMPARATIVE RETURN of Officers of the Post Office and Telegraph Department for the Years 1895 and 1896.

	1895.	1896.		1895.	1896.
Postmaster-General	1	1	Chief Postmasters	16	16
Secretary	1	1	Postmasters and Officers in Charge on Permanent Staff	162	162
Superintendent of Electric Lines ..	1	1	Clerks (including Telephone Exchange Cadettes and Cadets in Post-offices)	768	862
Assistant Secretary and Inspector ..	1	1	Operators (including Cadets in Telegraph-offices)	1,204	1,277
Assistant Inspectors of Post-offices ..	3	3	Country Postmasters and Telephonists ..	159	168
Controller of Money-orders and Savings-banks and Accountant	1	1	Letter-carriers	24	24
Telegraph Inspectors	3	3	Messengers (Post Office)	63	58
Telegraph Sub-Inspector	1	1	Linenmen	225	273
Electrician	1	1	Telegraph Message Boys	2	2
Mechanicians and Cadet	5	5	Nightwatchmen .. ..	..	..
Clerks in General Post Office—			Postmasters and Telegraphists or Telephonists who are Railway officers ..	139	138
Secretary's Office	11	12			
Inspector's and Dead-letter Branch ..	5	6			
Money-order and Savings-bank Branch ..	23	27			
Sorters in Clearing-room	13	13			
Storekeeper and Assistants	4	4			
			Totals	2,836	3,060

The health of the staff has been good on the whole, although one or two cases of lengthened absence have raised the average absence of the women employed to 10·37 days, as against 5·5 days for last year. The average absence of male officers, however, declined from 3·8 days to 2·8 days. The summer months showed a very slight difference from the winter so far as the men were concerned, but the average absence of women increased during the summer to 6·26 days, as compared with 4·07 days in the winter. The usual table is shown below :—

	Numbers comprised.	Average Absence per Sick Officer.	Average Sick Absence per each Officer employed.
Men	897	Days. 6·32	Days. 2·80
Women	131	9·70	10·37