

RECEIPTS and PAYMENTS on Account of the San Francisco, Peninsular and Oriental, and Orient
Mail-services for the Year 1896.

San Francisco Service.

DR.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Payments by weight—									
On mails from New Zealand ...	7,622	19	4						
On mails from the United Kingdom ...	5,019	3	11						
On mails from the Australian Colonies, Fiji, &c.	5,524	8	0						
				18,166	11	3			
Interprovincial service, mail agents, &c. ...				3,798	1	5			
Transit charges { San Francisco to New York ...				4,769	15	8			
{ New York to Queenstown ...				1,967	8	2			
							28,701	16	6
CR.									
Postages collected in the colony ...				10,553	9	8			
Postages from London... ..				5,019	3	11			
Contributions from non-contracting colonies ...				5,524	8	0			
							21,097	1	7
Net cost to the colony							£7,604	14	11

Although this colony is not a party to the Federal mail contract, it is a matter of interest to note that the service has been renewed for a term of seven years. Under the new contract the mails will be delivered between Adelaide and Brindisi in 686 hours, and between Adelaide and Naples in 696 hours, an acceleration of 3 days 22 hours and 3 days 12 hours, reducing the time, London and Adelaide, to between 30 and 31 days. The subsidy payable by the contracting colonies is £75,000 a year, as at present.

480,982 letters, 1,329 post-cards, 489,260 books, and 1,042,311 newspapers were received from, and 517,975 letters, 1,431 post-cards, 89,107 books, and 403,223 newspapers despatched to, the United Kingdom *via* San Francisco. The letters received from the United Kingdom by this route show an increase of 1·19 per cent., the post-cards an increase of 1·14 per cent., the books a decrease of 1·13 per cent., and the newspapers a decrease of 1·13 per cent.; the letters despatched thereto an increase of 2·46 per cent., the post-cards an increase of 2·36 per cent., the books a decrease of 0·74 per cent., and the newspapers a decrease of 0·74 per cent., as compared with the numbers forwarded in 1895.

P. and O. and Orient Lines (Federal Mail-service).

DR.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Payments to P. and O. and Orient lines ...	3,685	6	3			
Transit charges across Australia ...	238	6	8			
Transit charges across European Continent ...	587	2	1			
Gratuities (to and from Australia) ...	1,716	19	10			
						6,227 14 10
CR.						
Postages collected in the colony ...	3,221	17	5			
Postages from London and foreign offices ...	932	5	4			
						4,154 2 9
Net cost to the colony						£2,073 12 1

The numbers of letters, post-cards, books, and newspapers conveyed from and to the United Kingdom by the P. and O. and Orient packets were: Received—433,008 letters, 1,196 post-cards, 264,671 books, and 1,066,231 newspapers; despatched—152,108 letters, 420 post-cards, 27,300 books, and 116,255 newspapers.

The average time within which mails were delivered by the San Francisco service was: From Auckland to London, 32·54 days, as against 33·08 days in 1895; and from London to Auckland, 34·31 days, as compared with 32·85 days in the previous year. The shortest delivery was made in 32 days.

The maximum, minimum, and average number of days within which the mails were delivered at and from London and Auckland, Wellington, Dunedin, and Bluff during 1896 by the San Francisco contract service, and by the Peninsular and Oriental and Orient lines, were:—

	San Francisco Service.			P. and O. Line.			Orient Line.		
London to Auckland ..	39	32	34·31	47	38	40·54	45	39	42·19
Auckland to London ..	35	32	32·54	45	38	40·32	45	37	40·50
London to Wellington..	41	34	36·00	46	38	40·96	49	38	41·81
Wellington to London..	37	33	34·46	46	39	42·63	47	37	41·45
London to Dunedin ..	42	35	37·23	47	39	42·75	49	39	42·94
Dunedin to London ..	38	35	35·54	48	39	42·08	49	38	41·44
London to Bluff ..	43	36	37·98	46	38	42·00	48	38	42·19
Bluff to London ..	39	36	36·29	47	38	41·33	48	37	40·69