

The forwarded and received cable Press business for the past seven years has been :—

Year.	Forwarded.			Received.		
	Number of		Value.	Number of		Value.
	Messages.	Words.		Messages.	Words.	
1891	837	45,285	£ s. d. 932 15 8	2,828	198,935	£ s. d. 2,739 6 0
1892	791	44,263	898 3 9	2,884	197,477	2,796 9 4
1893	796	57,390	504 9 9	2,883	202,170	1,540 17 10
1894	994	103,366	899 4 9	3,033	203,326	1,179 13 7
1895	1,168	68,682	433 13 0	3,926	314,136	1,782 13 5
1896	1,069	92,946	531 4 9	2,946	285,369	1,576 1 3
1897	1,294	128,839	945 4 8	3,665	323,617	1,752 7 5

NOTE.—The intercolonial cable Press rate was reduced from 3d. to 1d. per word on the 1st April, 1893.

POST OFFICE.

The number of articles posted in the colony, and received from places outside the colony, during 1897, as compared with the number in 1896, was as under :—

	1897.	1896.	Increase.
Letters—			
Posted in the colony	30,260,204	27,874,353	
Received from places outside the colony	2,012,719	1,913,410	
	32,272,923	29,787,763	2,485,160
Letter-cards posted in the colony	757,172	654,290	102,882
Post-cards—			
Posted in the colony	1,325,272	1,226,550	
Received from places outside the colony	16,549	5,285	
	1,341,821	1,231,835	109,986
Books and pattern-packets—			
Posted in the colony	12,351,443	10,048,597	
Received from places outside the colony	2,276,389	2,598,674	
	14,627,832	12,647,271	1,980,561
Newspapers—			
Posted in the colony	10,177,089	9,521,525	
Received from places outside the colony	4,084,256	3,694,996	
	14,261,345	13,216,521	1,044,824
Parcels—			
Posted in the colony	173,856	166,702	
Received from places outside the colony	23,698	19,909	
	197,554	186,611	10,943

The letters increased 8·34, books and pattern-packets 15·66, newspapers 7·91, parcels 5·86, letter-cards 15·72, post-cards 8·93 per cent.

The increase in 1896 was : Letters, 2·89; books, &c., 16·60; newspapers, 4·27; parcels, 5·91; letter-cards, 2·71; and post-cards, 2·51 per cent.

The average number of letters posted per head of population was estimated to be 41·93, or 42·98 including letter-cards. The averages in 1896 were 39·43 and 40·36 respectively.

The Post Office receipts for the financial year amounted to £272,162 19s. 9d.—an increase of £9,680 14s. 3d., or 3·69 per cent.

The expenditure was £197,355 6s. 11d., as against £196,242 19s. 8d. for the previous year—an increase of £1,112 7s. 3d., or 0·56 per cent.

There was therefore a balance of revenue over expenditure of £74,807 12s. 10d.

The estimated value of official (free) correspondence was £72,521. The gross earnings of the Post Office for the year were £344,683 19s. 9d., and the credit balance £147,328 12s. 10d.

Customs duties amounting to £9,567 12s. 11d. were collected on articles received through the post from places beyond the colony, and £1,309 18s. 6d. on account of ordinary Customs work.

The sum of £1,724 10s. was collected from the sale of game-licenses.

Premiums amounting to £28,059 19s. 7d. were collected from policyholders on behalf of the Government Life Insurance Department.

£331 7s. 9d. was collected for the Government Printer on the sale of Government publications.

Income-tax amounting to £62,633 0s. 11d., and land-tax for £191,975 16s. 11d., were received at post-offices.

Fees under the Live-stock Acts amounting to £17,891 4s. 7d. were collected.

The sum of £3,508 11s. was received for machinery-fees.

The receipts from the sale of miners' licenses amounted to £1,380 6s.

£9,815 was lodged at post-offices for investment in New Zealand Consols.

Receipts on behalf of the Public Trust Office amounted to £302,358 6s. 7d, and payments to £301,872 10s. 4d., as compared with £205,731 11s. 8d. and £202,664 7s. the previous year.

Railway receipts amounting to £15,338 8s. 11d. were also accounted for through the Post Office Account.

The fees collected in respect of the registration of births, deaths, and marriages amounted to £2,053 6s. 6d.