

Delayed telegrams were abolished, and the ordinary-telegram rate reduced from 1s. to 6d., on 1st June, 1896.

The number of telegrams of all codes forwarded during last financial year was 2,960,738—an increase of 264,505, or 9·81 per cent., over 1897-98.

The proportion of telegrams per head of population was 4·02, as compared with 3·72 the previous year.

The number of ordinary telegrams forwarded was 2,242,387, of the value of £78,499 11s. 2d., compared with 2,023,421, for £72,848 8s. 2d., in 1897-98—an increase of 218,966 and £5,651 3s. 0d.

The urgent telegrams numbered 113,438, of the value of £8,387 18s. 5d.—an increase of 6,841 messages, but a decrease of £582 6s. 8d.

217,783 Press telegrams, of the value of £10,140 14s. 6d., were forwarded in 1898-99, as compared with 220,754, valued at £9,207 18s. 3d., forwarded in 1897-98—a decrease of 2,971, or 1·35 per cent., in number, but an increase of 10·13 per cent. in value.

The value of each Press telegram averaged 11·18d., as against 10·01d. in 1897-98.

The bureau messages numbered 143,940, of the value of £3,726 18s. 4d., as compared with 118,643, of the value of £2,909 3s. 2d.—an increase of 25,297 in number and £817 15s. 2d. in amount.

The average value of each bureau message was 6·21d., as against 5·88d. in 1897-98.

The number of Government telegrams forwarded was 243,190, valued at £25,500 5s. 10d., as compared with 226,818, of the value of £24,504 9s. 8d.—an increase of 16,372 in number and of £995 16s. 2d. in amount.

35,204 money-orders for £114,622 13s. 1d. were transmitted by telegraph, as against 33,601 for £113,584 17s. 8d. in 1897-98—an increase of 1,603 telegrams, or 4·77 per cent.

The number of forwarded telegrams to every hundred letters posted in New Zealand for delivery within the colony was 9·12, as against 8·91 in 1897-98.

The telegraph cash receipts for the financial year, including telephone-exchange subscriptions, private-wire rents, &c., amounted to £145,294 13s. 7d., compared with 136,220 15s. 6d. in 1897-98—an increase of £9,073 18s. 1d., or 6·66 per cent.

The expenditure, excluding cable subsidy, was £173,152 16s. 6d., as compared with £165,198 13s. 5d. the previous year—an increase of £7,954 3s. 1d., or 4·81 per cent.

There were 6,736 miles of line and 18,747 miles of wire at the close of the year—an increase of 252 and 723 miles respectively.

The net expenditure out of loan for telegraph extension was £28,550 14s., as compared with £29,384 2s. 11d. in 1897-98.

The number of private wires and subsidised lines was 201, compared with 157 in 1897-98. The amount received for rent, maintenance, &c., was £1,390 18s. 3d., as against £1,364 5s. 5d. in 1897-98.

The total number of telegraph- and telephone-offices open at the close of the year was 878. Of these, 235 were telegraph and 643 telephone-offices.

Sixty telephone-offices were opened and six closed. The following telephone-offices were opened:—

Annandale.	Great North Road.	Owen Junction.	Ti-tree Point.
Aorere.	Hawarden.	Paeroa Railway.	Toiro.
Aorua.	Heddon Bush.	Papanui Bureau.	Tongaporutu.
Arch Hill.	Inangahua Landing.	Porocotara.	Tongaporutu Ferry.
Ashley Bank.	Kaituna.	Ranfurly.	Upper Onechunga.
Awakino.	Lepperton.	Rockville.	Urenui.
Bainham.	Mahoenui.	Round Hill.	Uruti Road.
Black's Point.	Mayfield.	Saies.	Waihopo.
Clifden.	Mokau.	Seatoun.	Waipapa.
Crushington.	Mokau Pilot-station.	Strathmore.	Wairau Ford.
Cunningham's.	Molesworth Street.	Tataramaka.	Warea.
Drayerton.	Murital.	Tawataia.	Warepa.
Eastern Bush.	Onaero.	Te Kao.	Whatatutu.
Fernside.	Opitonui.	Te Karaka.	Windsor.
German Bay.	Orawia.	Te Kuiti.	Woodend.

The offices at Mokihiui, Oamaru Railway, Sandymount, Sumner Bureau No. 2, and Wai-kaka Siding were closed.

TELEPHONE EXCHANGES.

There were on the 31st March last eighteen central exchanges and thirteen sub-exchanges.

The following is a comparative return of the telephone-exchange connections for the years 1897-98 and 1898-99:—

Exchange.	Number of Subscribers or Connections:	
	Mar. 31, 1898.	Mar. 31, 1899.
Ashburton	96	102
Auckland	1,039	1,041
Blenheim	65	67
Christchurch	848	894
Rangiora	...	14
Dunedin	907	954
Balclutha	13	14
Kaitangata	6	6
Milton	19	19
Port Chalmers	17	17
Gisborne	97	123
Greymouth	81	86
Invercargill	211	216