

The following table shows the number and weight of parcels exchanged with the United Kingdom, and foreign countries *via* London, the Australian Colonies and the South Sea Islands, during the years 1898 and 1899 :—

Country.	Received.				Despatched.			
	1898.		1899.		1898.		1899.	
	Number.	Weight.	Number.	Weight.	Number.	Weight.	Number.	Weight.
		lb. oz.		lb. oz.		lb. oz.		lb. oz.
United Kingdom and foreign offices (<i>via</i> London)	17,823	58,865 0	19,719	68,628 0	4,023	9,705 8	4,524	10,128 5
Victoria	3,292	10,682 8	3,235	11,076 0	1,311	2,792 3	1,346	2,771 13
New South Wales ..	4,614	13,384 3	5,691	16,097 8	1,779	4,601 15	1,975	5,714 1
South Australia ..	235	688 2	258	779 15	190	517 13	194	527 13
Queensland	343	704 0	327	712 12	267	686 15	293	748 0
Tasmania	143	382 0	152	434 11	308	747 4	315	712 3
Western Australia ..	190	459 11	244	538 0	236	543 2	266	739 13
Samoa	17	65 11	14	62 11	123	382 4	213	667 3
Rarotonga	5	18 5	10	15 0	62	218 4	70	220 5
Fiji	14	53 12	29	60 13	27	112 3	109	324 11
Hawaii	42	97 8	56	115 4½	18	55 9	24	62 3
Ceylon	326	701 12	340	739 15	145	249 0	166	379 1
Uruguay .. ..	..	..	..	..	15	18 13	14	54 0
Vancouver .. ..	..	..	132	178 0	37	101 8	67	139 0
Totals	27,044	86,102 8	30,207	99,438 9½	8,541	20,732 5	9,576	23,188 7

The declared value of parcels received from places outside the colony in 1899 was £70,094. The Customs duty collected amounted to £15,849 18s. 2d. The declared value of parcels despatched to places beyond the colony was £10,806, as against £9,245 in 1898.

A scheme for the transmission of duty-paid parcels was inaugurated on the 1st October last. Under this arrangement persons in the United Kingdom can forward parcels to New Zealand for delivery, free of all charge, the sender paying all Customs duties, redirection-fees, &c., to the Post Office in the United Kingdom. As this scheme has only been in force for a limited period, it cannot be stated at present to what extent the franked-parcel system is likely to be taken advantage of.

The insurance of parcels to and from the United Kingdom appears to be appreciated by the public, and is largely used, especially in connection with valuable parcels forwarded from the United Kingdom for delivery in the colony. The inland and Australian insurance system has not so far, however, been made use of to any great extent.

On the 1st instant a parcel-post system was established with the United States of America. Although the question of this exchange was mooted as far back as 1890, the authorities of the United States Post Office have only now been able to agree to the exchange. It is understood that New Zealand is the first of the Australasian Colonies which is in the position of being able to send and receive parcels by post to and from America.

OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

The estimated volume and value of official and other free correspondence posted during 1899 is given in the statement below :—

District.	Letters.	Packets.	Registered Articles.	Newspapers.	Postage Value of Official Correspondence.
					£
Auckland	269,653	16,518	15,437	41,357	6,189
Thames	47,599	3,097	1,602	20,995	1,324
New Plymouth ..	107,677	10,794	1,727	33,225	2,775
Gisborne	22,615	901	863	10,024	622
Napier	116,966	10,148	2,386	38,685	3,026
Wanganui	198,629	16,420	4,030	87,042	5,540
Wellington	928,060	152,135	28,011	176,897	23,281
Nelson	77,808	5,110	4,965	39,344	2,302
Westport	24,572	208	1,200	20,956	848
Greymouth	73,681	3,148	2,264	40,124	2,157
Hokitika	21,208	2,500	1,800	10,621	653
Blenheim	56,905	2,500	550	21,000	1,464
Christchurch ..	285,015	18,075	12,285	109,002	7,689
Timaru	70,655	3,000	1,579	30,000	1,904
Oamaru	41,405	1,378	1,528	31,411	1,370
Dunedin	328,572	39,280	5,244	173,712	9,895
Invercargill ..	187,608	18,237	3,665	75,456	5,156
Totals	2,858,628	303,449	89,136	959,851	76,195