

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 1899 by the San Francisco service and by the Peninsular and Oriental and Orient lines, was :—

	San Francisco Service.				P. and O. Line.				Orient Line.		
	Max.	Min.	Average.		Max.	Min.	Average.		Max.	Min.	Average.
London to Auckland ..	33	31	31·54	..	39	37	38·08	..	43	37	38·85
Auckland to London ..	35	30	30·85	..	42	39	40·46	..	43	37	40·12
London to Wellington ..	34	32	32·77	..	42	36	39·15	..	45	38	39·38
Wellington to London ..	36	32	32·69	..	45	37	41·73	..	45	37	42·22
London to Dunedin ..	35	33	33·92	..	46	38	40·40	..	46	38	40·48
Dunedin to London ..	38	33	33·85	..	46	39	40·34	..	45	38	40·66
London to Bluff ..	36	34	34·67	..	45	37	39·65	..	45	37	39·73
Bluff to London ..	39	34	34·60	..	45	38	39·59	..	44	37	39·91

The several subsidised mail sea-services, the subsidy-payments for the year 1899, the dates when established, and the date on which each terminates are shown as follows :—

Service.	Annual Subsidy or Payment.	Duration of Service.		Number of Voyages per Annum.	Mileage for Complete Voyage.	Cost per Mile.
		When established.	When terminated or terminable.			
	£ s. d.					s. d.
Auckland and San Francisco ..	12,145 8 11	April, 1871	Mar., 1901	13	11,850	1 6·92
Wellington and Vancouver ..	7,500 0 0 ^a	Dec., 1897	Mar., 1899	13	13,320	0 10·40
Auckland and Fiji ..	1,690 0 0	June, 1880	..	13	2,334	1 1·37
Auckland and South Pacific Islands	1,200 0 0	June, 1885	..	12	6,992	0 3·43
Auckland and Devonport ..	60 0 0	Aug., 1863	Dec., 1902	939	6	0 2·56
Auckland and Great Barrier ..	250 0 0	Oct., 1891	Dec., 1902	52	120	0 9·62
Dargaville and Tangihua (Tangite-roria)	75 0 0	Nov., 1893	Dec., 1902	52	46	0 7·53
Helensville and Matakohē ..	500 0 0	Jan., 1881	Dec., 1902	52	118	0 5·04
Helensville and Dargaville ..				104	170	
Horeke, Kohukohu, Rawene, Wai-tapu, and Opononi ..	148 10 0	Jan., 1889	Dec., 1902	52	48	1 2·28
Russell and Opuā ..	90 0 0	Jan., 1889	Dec., 1902	104	16	1 0·98
Whangaroa and Totara North ..	25 0 0	Jan., 1891	Dec., 1902	52	2	4 9·69
Wellington, Ketu Bay, Homewood, Maori Bay (and other offices), and Havelock ..	170 0 0 ^b	Dec., 1891	Aug., 1899	13	183	2 5·15
Nelson, Motueka, Totaranui, Ta-kaka, and Collingwood ..	350 0 0	Sept., 1899	Dec., 1902	13		1 11·30
Westport and Karamēa ..	200 0 0	June, 1886	Dec., 1902	52	130	0 4·44
Westport and Little Wanganui ..			Dec., 1902	26	102	1 1·20
Hokitika, Okarito, Bruce Bay, Pa-ringa, Haast, Okura, and Jack-son's Bay ..	600 0 0	Jan., 1886	Dec., 1902	12	82	
Lyttelton and Chatham Islands ..				6	384	5 2·50
Bluff and Half-moon Bay ..	300 0 0	..	Mar., 1902	6	1,050	0 11·43
Bluff, Te Oneroa, and Cromarty ..	300 0 0	July, 1886	Dec., 1902	52	48	2 4·85
Interprovincial service in connec-tion with San Francisco line ..	3,000 0 0	Nov., 1886	..	12	208	2 10·62
Interprovincial service in connec-tion with Vancouver line ..	3,500 0 0 ^c	April, 1899	Mar., 1899	13
	3,000 0 0 ^a	Dec., 1897	Mar., 1899

^a Only proportion due for quarter to 31st March, 1899, expended. ^b Represents £10 a trip for a temporary service. ^c Plus one-thirteenth of £500 for each trip on which steamer with inward mails leaves Onehunga on a Tuesday.

BUILDINGS.

The altogether insufficient accommodation at the chief post-offices at Auckland, Wellington, and Dunedin is seriously interfering with the efficient performance of the work of the department at those places, and the expansion of business during the year has rendered it necessary that additional floor-space should be provided without further delay. The difficulty at Auckland is now being met by structural alterations and additions to the post-office building at a cost of about £4,000, which should suffice to meet requirements for some time to come. The substitution of steel pillars and girders for the massive brick arches on the main floor of the building will result in largely increased space being obtained for the mail-room, and admit of the counters and public lobby being extended and enlarged. The wants of the money-order and savings-bank branch and the letter-carriers will be met by building over the present area to the eastern side of the building.

On the completion of the new Supreme Court at Dunedin the proposed rearrangement of the accommodation in the building in which the chief post-office is situated, providing much needed additional space for the postal business, will be put in hand.

While Auckland and Dunedin are to be provided for, nothing as yet has been decided upon for Wellington, where the need for additional accommodation for staff and public is far more pressing. It is imperative that additional office-space be secured without further delay.

New offices were erected at Cronadon, Mangaweka, Masterton, Mosgiel, Petone, Renwick-town, and Wellington South (Newtown), and buildings were purchased for the post-offices at New Brighton, Parnell, and Pouto.

Land for the erection of post-office buildings was purchased at Caversham, Levin, Newtown, and Takaka.

The following general repairs, additions, &c., were carried out during the year: Painting, Ahaura; repairs and painting, Annat; new fence and verandah, painting and repairs, Ashbur-ton; repairs, alterations, cleaning, and painting, Auckland; fittings, Balfour; additions, Chatham Islands; additions to accommodate new telephone switchboard, &c., Christchurch;