

There is also an item of expenditure incurred in the Auckland Office of a somewhat different character, which requires to be noticed here.

The despatch of the early overland mails, which takes place every morning, requires the daily attendance of Clerk at the Office between 7 and 8 o'clock, thus occasioning permanent extra work; and it is proposed, instead of calculating this duty by the hour, to make a permanent provision for it at a fixed sum. The payments for this service during last year, amounted to £39. 2s. 6d; it is proposed to appropriate a round sum of £40 as a remuneration for his duty.

To revert, however, to the question of readjusting the salaries, the present rates are as follows:—

First Clerk .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	250	0	0	per annum.
Second ditto .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	180	0	0	“
Third ditto .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	180	0	0	“
Letter carrier .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	100	7	6	“
“ .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	80	0	0	“
Messenger .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	80	0	0	“
					<u>£870</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	

1st. As regards the first Clerk, though a very efficient and trustworthy Officer, it is not proposed to raise his salary, as he is already paid much more highly than any other clerk in the whole department, and it does not seem advisable to make the disproportion greater.

2nd. The second Clerk has earned during the year, as extra allowance, £10. 15s.; it is proposed, in lieu of this, to make an addition of £10 per annum to his permanent salary.

3rd. The third Clerk, though giving general satisfaction, has been only a short time in the employment, and being already in the receipt of a salary somewhat out of proportion to his standing in the service, it is proposed to leave his salary at the present rate.

4th. The first letter carrier, now paid at the permanent rate of £100. 7s. 6d. per annum, has earned at the rate of £5. 18s. for extra hours; it is proposed to raise his permanent salary to £105 per annum.

5th. The second letter carrier's salary is £80, and he has earned at the rate of £12 per annum. It is proposed to fix his salary at £92 per annum.

6th. The messenger, who now receives £80 per annum, and has earned £5. 8s., it is proposed to pay him after the rate of £90 per annum.

The following is a comparison of the present and proposed arrangements:—

	Under present arrangements.				Under proposed arrangements.			Rate of Expenditure.
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.	
First clerk ... ..	250	0	0	.....	250	0	0	
Second ditto ... ..	180	0	0	.....	190	0	0	
Third ditto ... ..	180	0	0	.....	180	0	0	
Letter carrier ... ..	100	7	6	.....	105	0	0	
“ .....	80	0	0	.....	92	0	0	
Messenger ... ..	80	0	0	.....	90	0	0	
Despatch of early mails	39	2	6	.....	40	0	0	
Extra allowances ... ..	53	14	0	.....	...			
					<u>£968</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	
					<u>£947</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	

—This plan of commutation, whereby an equivalent is given for the present casual allowances, by making a proportionate increase to permanent salaries, would be of course based upon the supposition that the present rate of payment to the Clerks employed in the Auckland Post Office ought to be perpetuated.

It becomes, however, a question whether some approach to a general adjustment of salaries ought not to be made according to some recognized standard.

Hitherto, the rate of remuneration appears to have been made arbitrarily and upon no fixed principle. The scale adopted in the Auckland Post Office, in particular, is out of all proportion to that adopted in every other, thus creating a distinction which can hardly be conducive to the well-working of the department as a whole.

Without attempting to introduce absolute uniformity in this matter, a fair compromise perhaps might be made, by leaving the present salaries as they stand, and putting an end to the practice of giving extra allowances of any kind.

This would apply also to the item for the despatch of early overland mails.

No extra charge is made on this account at any other Office, and there does not appear to be any reason for making an exception to the general rule in the case of Auckland.

The work of despatching early mails is performed as often as required at other places without extra remuneration; such mails are despatched, for instance, from Christchurch and Lyttelton daily, the Postmaster at those places giving their attendance as part of the ordinary business of the Office.

The means of conveyance of correspondence overland have been considerably increased during the past year. Overland Communication,