

COMPARATIVE RETURN—CONTINUED.

PLACES.	DUNEDIN.					
	RECEIVED FROM.		DESPATCHED TO.		TOTALS RECEIVED AND DESPACHED.	
	Letters.	Newspapers.	Letters.	Newspapers.	Letters.	Newspapers.
WITHOUT THE COLONY.						
United Kingdom	32,487	67,800	47,401	41,273	79,888	109,073
Australian Colonies	90,134	59,337	91,175	52,900	181,309	112,237
Other Places	1,025	596	2,009	744	3,034	1,340
Total Foreign	123,646	127,733	140,585	94,917	264,231	195,650
WITHIN THE COLONY.						
Other Provinces of New Zealand	31,435	20,827	20,994	24,819	52,429	45,646
Within Province	141,737	16,752	129,997	88,293	271,734	105,045
Total Home	173,172	37,579	150,991	113,112	324,163	150,691
General Totals	296,818	165,312	291,576	208,029	588,394	346,341

Attached to the Post Office in England are fourteen Surveyors, each of whom has the supervision of all Offices within a certain assigned district. Among the duties of a Post Office Surveyor are, periodically reporting to the Postmaster-General on the state and efficiency of each office within his district, investigating complaints about missing letters, neglect of duty, &c., &c., taking control of all overland services, and generally acquainting himself with the postal requirements of every part of his district, from which he is able to afford the fullest information to the Postmaster-General on all matters relating to internal postal arrangements. He is also in a position to decide on the strength of staff required for the efficient and economical performance of the work of every Office within his district.

The time is approaching when such an Officer ought to be attached to the staff of the Postmaster-General of New Zealand. The great want of proper inspection of Country Offices has long been felt. It is not often easy to obtain reliable information as to the best route along which an Inland Mail should travel, and the respective Chief Postmasters are so constantly required at their Offices, that they have no time at their disposal to perform the duties of Inspector or Surveyor. With regard to missing or delayed letters, and to complaints of neglect, there is a good deal of difficulty felt in instituting anything like a real enquiry into the circumstances. A complaint is made; but there is no one to investigate it, except the Postmaster, whose office is complained of, and frequently no really sufficient explanations can be obtained.

Enquiries of this nature would be of a much more satisfactory kind, if they were made by an independent Officer. In many other ways an active and intelligent man, fully conversant with business, with good local knowledge, would be found very useful in conducting, not only the Postal Service of the Colony, but the Customs and other Departments under the control of the General Government. From the number of chief Post Offices—each of which is a separate despatching and receiving Office—and the number of Port Towns in New Zealand, it will hardly be possible to get on much longer without a confidential Officer of this kind.

Hitherto the Ministers directing the Post Office, Customs, and Treasury, have sought to perform this work; but from the multiplicity of duties, of late at least, imposed upon them, and from the evanescent nature of their Offices, it has been found impossible to give the necessary amount of time to supervision of the kind which is meant here.