

1874.

NEW ZEALAND.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT.

(FIFTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT.)

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by command of His Excellency.

SIR,—

General Post Office, Wellington, 19th July, 1874.

I have the honor to submit to your Excellency the Fifteenth Annual Report on the Postal Service of New Zealand.

His Excellency,
The Right Honorable Sir James Fergusson, Baronet,
Governor of New Zealand.

I have, &c.,
JULIUS VOGEL,
Postmaster-General.

R E P O R T.

THE increase in the business of the department during the year, has not only been considerable, but has also been of the most satisfactory character. It will be observed, from the tables appended to the report, that the increase was not confined to any particular branch of the department, but was of a general character throughout the service—a result which may fairly be ascribed to the prosperous condition of the colony. The revenue largely exceeded the amount estimated; and the expenditure for salaries, and inland mail services, has been less than the sums voted, notwithstanding the large increase of business.

Circumstances rendered it necessary to make considerable changes in the staff of the department during the year, and some difficulty has been experienced in securing proper and efficient assistance. Several letter carriers have been promoted to junior clerkships, and it has been found absolutely necessary to engage the services of persons above the age of cadets.

The department has secured the services of a gentleman as Inspector who has had large experience in the Imperial Post Office. A proper system of official inspection is now being brought into operation. The want of such a system has been seriously felt for some time past.

It has been considered desirable to alter the regulations affecting Sunday duty. The rule was, that no Post Office should be opened, and no officer should attend office on Sunday. After a brief trial, this was found to operate very unfairly against the mail clerks. It had also been stated that, in the event of an English, or other heavy mails, arriving at the larger Post Offices on Sunday, it would be impracticable to despatch the correspondence to Country Post Offices by the Monday morning mails, if the inward mails were not sorted on arrival. It was therefore decided that attendance at Post Offices on Sunday should be entirely optional with the officers themselves; and that any officer attending office for the purpose of sorting mails arriving on a Sunday, would be paid for overtime. The question of Sunday duty has received very careful consideration. It has been urged in several quarters, that mails arriving late on Saturday, or during Sunday, should be opened, and the correspondence delivered on Sunday. The department, however, held the opinion that only in very rare and exceptional cases should Post Offices be opened on Sunday; and that it was desirable the Post Office officials should be at liberty to exercise their individual opinions in the matter of Sunday observance. In the neighbouring colonies, the Post Offices are, it is believed, strictly closed on Sunday.

The first number of a Postal Guide, published quarterly, was issued in January last. In addition to the usual information found in such publications, full particulars are furnished respecting the Telegraph, and Government Life Insurance and Annuities Departments.