

1880.
NEW ZEALAND.

TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT,

(SIXTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT.)

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

SIR,—

Office of the Commissioner of Telegraphs, Wellington, 7th May, 1880.

I have the honor to submit to your Excellency a report on the operations of the Telegraph Department of New Zealand, for the period from the 1st July, 1879, to the 31st March, 1880.

The report embraces a statement of nine months' operations only, owing to the termination of the financial year being changed to the 31st March, a date three months earlier than heretofore.

I have, &c.,

JOHN HALL,

Commissioner of Telegraphs.

His Excellency Sir Hercules Robinson, K.C.M.G.,
Governor of New Zealand.

REPORT.

THE revenue for the year was estimated at £80,000. For the nine months ended the 31st March it amounts to £53,914 13s. 5d.

The value of Government telegrams transmitted during the year amounts to £19,707 6s. 3d. This, with subsidies for special wire, private lines, and incidental receipts, added to the revenue as above stated, brings the total earnings of the department up to £77,827 9s. 6d.

The gross earnings of the department for the year ended 30th June, 1879, were £112,328 13s. 9d. Comparing this with the total receipts for the nine months of the present year, a falling-off of something over £15,000 is visible. This is fully accounted for by the commercial depression which has been so strongly felt throughout the colony for some time past. It is, however, satisfactory to note that the revenue is again on the increase. It is well known that the telegraph is almost immediately affected by the improvement or falling-off of trade generally, and it will not therefore be a matter for surprise that the revenue from this source has not come up to the estimate.

The total number of messages of all codes transmitted during the nine months of the year was 1,008,409, being a proportional decrease, in comparison with the previous year, of 188,432.

It will be seen on reference to the debtor and creditor statement that the expenditure exceeds the receipts and value of work done by £5,582 5s. 9d. This is a more unsatisfactory statement than has had to be made for many years, but is fully accounted for by the falling-off in the revenue. As a temporary failure of revenue would not justify the closing of any of the existing offices, the expenditure in maintenance and salaries has of necessity remained the same. It will also be remembered that during the last session a decided opinion was expressed in the House that officers should be frequently removed from one part of the colony to another, and this has been done at a very large cost to the department. I have no doubt, however, that the changes made will have a very beneficial result.

Comparing the number of telegrams transmitted during the nine months with the letters posted during the same period, it will be seen that 14·27 telegrams were sent for every 100 letters. The proportion last year was 19·64.

The number of money-order telegrams sent during the nine months was 11,291, representing a value of £46,425 5s., showing a slight proportional decrease in comparison with the preceding year, both in messages and value. The commission collected by the Post Office on these transactions amounts to £1,338 3s. 9d., and, after deducting the fees due to this department for telegrams, amounting to £564 11s., leaves to the credit of the Post Office £773 12s. 9d., which is equal to 1·66 per cent. on the amount transmitted. It will be seen on reference to Table I. that Wellington again stands first as having issued the largest number of orders; then Auckland, Dunedin, and Christchurch in the order mentioned.

Some few months ago, a letter appeared in the *London Times*, describing the facilities afforded by the New Zealand Telegraph Department for the transmission of money, and suggesting that a similar system should be adopted by the English Telegraph Offices. There is no reason why it should