

on the number of letters and packages now sent through the post. At present a large number of official documents are forwarded simply because it is possible to send them free, and the Post Office is otherwise made use of for the transmission of matter which scarcely comes within the definition of "official correspondence." By way of indicating that the free official correspondence of the colony is in excess of what it should be, it may be cited that the Victorian Post Office estimated the value of the free correspondence posted by the several departments of the Victorian Service last year at about £30,000. The value of the official correspondence for the United Kingdom sent by post for the year ended 31st March, 1880, was £109,049, and the weight about 658 tons. To arrive at a fair comparison between the United Kingdom and New Zealand, the relative quantity, and not the value, should be considered.

The colony has received renewed proposals from the Colonial Office, and again been urged, in conjunction with the other colonies, to enter the General Postal Union. Up to the present time, however no decision has been arrived at. The later proposals seem less favourable than those formerly submitted, and it is doubtful if either the Australian Colonies would be inclined to give its adhesion to the Union Scheme until such time as a definite and satisfactory understanding shall be arrived at respecting the future maintenance of the ocean mail services between the colonies and the mother-country.

It is a matter of satisfaction to state that the United States Post Office authorities have now consented to establish an exchange of money orders between the United States and New Zealand. It is anticipated this extension of the money-order system will be arranged by the end of the year. The further extension of the system to Canada, India, Hongkong, and the Cape of Good Hope is to be considered.

Inquiries have been made as to the alleged intention of the London Post Office to establish a parcels post between the United Kingdom and the colonies; and, so soon as a reply has been received, it is the intention of the department to take practical action in the matter.

The several Post Office Acts have been consolidated by the Statutes Revision Commission. A Bill consolidating the several Acts has been submitted to Parliament, which it is hoped may be passed this session. Several amendments have been incorporated in the Bill, principally with the object of making the law clearer. That the Bill consolidates ten Acts, is in itself a circumstance which cannot be over-estimated in the administration of the service.

With the desire to provide a simple and convenient method for enabling school children to save their pence for ultimate deposit in Post Office Savings Banks, the department adopted the scheme recently introduced in the United Kingdom by the Imperial Post Office authorities, for receiving Savings Bank deposits of the value of one shilling by means of twelve penny postage-stamps, affixed to cards specially issued for the purpose. The scheme is a most simple one; and, as the labour of book-keeping is not involved, it has been received favourably by the teachers as well as by the scholars. It is more convenient and less costly than what is known as the penny-bank system. The scheme was introduced at the beginning of February last. At the close of March no less than 3,684 new accounts were opened under the regulations providing for the receipt of one shilling in penny postage-stamps for deposit from school children, with whom the scheme is exclusively confined.

The total Savings Bank deposits amounted to £864,441 18s. 10d., and the withdrawals to £780,504 13s. 4d.; the total sum to the credit of the depositors was £903,765 16s. 10d., an increase of £116,759 17s. 10d. over the deposits of the previous year.

135,648 money orders for £465,405 1s. 1d. were issued, and 104,107 for £350,313 6s. 8d. paid. 14,497 telegraph orders for £58,334 11s. 11d. were also issued. The total money-order commission was £7,943 15s. 4d., an increase of £658 13s. 10d. over the sum received the previous year.

14 additional receiving-boxes and 1 iron pillar receiver were erected during the year, and 2 receiving-boxes and 1 iron pillar removed. The total number of receivers at the end of the year was —100 receiving-boxes, and 29 iron pillars.

The Chief Post Offices at Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin now close for the transaction of Money Order and Savings Bank business at 2 p.m. on Saturdays, and re-open from 6.30 to 8.30 p.m., for the receipt of Savings Bank deposits. This extension in the evening is a decided convenience to a number of depositors who could not attend the offices during the day.

The Post Office, Gisborne, was made a chief office on the 1st April last. The boundaries of the Postal District of Gisborne are those of the County of Cook.

27 post offices were established, and 6 re-opened, at the following places:—

Canavan, Timaru.	Lake Takapuna, Auckland.	Tamumu (re-opened), Napier.
Campbelltown, Wellington.	Makino, Wellington.	Thornbury Junction, Invercargill.
Edenvale, Auckland.	Mandeville, Invercargill.	Te Mata, Auckland.
Elgin, Christchurch.	Mangawhero, Wanganui.	Te Aroha, Thames.
Flag Swamp (re-opened), Dunedin.	Mount Albert, Auckland.	Terrace End (re-opened), Wellington.
Fosbery, Greymouth.	Ngaroto, Auckland.	The Forks, Hokitika.
Gapes Valley, Timaru.	Oroua (re-opened), Wellington.	Waihou, Auckland.
Gladfield, Invercargill.	Pine Hill, Dunedin.	Winchmore, Christchurch.
Hende's Ferry, Hokitika.	Poroti, Auckland.	Weka Pass (re-opened), Christchurch.
Kingsland, Auckland.	Riversdale, Invercargill.	Whakataki (re-opened), Wellington.
Longford, Westport.	Sherwood, Christchurch.	Windsor, Oamaru.

The under-noted offices, 22 in number, were closed:—

Bainesse, Wellington.	Kirtleburn, Dunedin.	Tamumu, Napier.
Canoe Creek, Greymouth.	Makino Road, Wellington.	Terrace End, Wellington.
Eden Terrace, Auckland.	Milford, Timaru.	The Crossing (Nevis), Dunedin.
Glenham, Invercargill.	Ponsonby, Auckland.	Te Aro, Wellington.
Grove, Blenheim.	Pyramid, Invercargill.	Waitangi, Hokitika.
Grovetown, Blenheim.	Pinnacle, Dunedin.	Weka Pass, Christchurch.
Hampden, Westport.	Sergeant's Hill, Westport.	Wargrave, Napier.
Harcourt's Ferry, Hokitika.		