

The revenue from stamps is but an estimate, as, since the creating of the new series of stamps available for postage and other purposes, it has been impossible to determine what revenue properly belongs to the Post Office from the sale of stamps. From what is believed to have been a very accurate check made in June, 1882, the face-value of stamps on prepaid articles passing through the Post and the stamps on unpaid correspondence was estimated to yield over £130,000 a year. This sum has therefore been credited the revenue side of the statement as the value of "stamps used for postage." In the Treasury accounts, however, the item Postal revenue has been excised altogether; and receipts from the Post Office from the sale of stamps, money-order commission, private box and bag fees, postage from foreign offices, &c., are all brought under the head of "stamp revenue." It is the intention to suggest to the Treasury an amendment as to the manner of accounting for the several items of Postal revenue.

It may be explained that the expenditure in the foregoing statement does not include what has been charged against loan, or the public buildings' vote. £18,654 for telegraph extension and £9,938 for new buildings was expended out of loan; and £6,090 for buildings, alterations, repairs, office fittings, &c., was spent out of "Vote 111, Public Buildings," during the year; in all, £34,672. The carriage of mails by railway also is not debited against the department. This service, which is of the value of about £15,000 a year, is performed gratuitously, but it is admitted that payment should be made by the Post Office. Nor does the revenue side of the statement include the value of the whole of the services performed by the department, the official correspondence and telegrams, amounting to £84,361 8s. 4d. (for which no payment is received), not being taken credit for. It is desirable that the actual receipts and expenditure of a department such as the Post Office and Telegraph, more especially in a young colony like New Zealand, should be capable of being stated precisely and in a concise form; but this cannot be accomplished under the present system. Every item of Postal and Telegraph expenditure proper should, it is held, be made a direct charge against the departmental vote, and, on the other hand, the services now gratuitously performed for other departments be paid for.

POST OFFICE.

A very large increase of business was the result of the year's operations.

The number of letters, post-cards, book-packets and pattern-parcels, and newspapers delivered and posted, compared with the number dealt with in 1881, is recorded in the following statement:—

	1882.	1881.	Increase.
Letters—Delivered	45,526,719	13,588,740	
Posted	14,998,860	11,969,191	
	<u>30,525,579</u>	<u>25,557,931</u>	<u>4,967,648</u>
Post-cards—Delivered	418,477	382,174	
Posted	540,618	490,366	
	<u>959,095</u>	<u>872,540</u>	<u>86,555</u>
Book-packets and pattern-parcels—Delivered	1,087,584	940,238	
Posted	1,308,671	921,944	
	<u>2,396,255</u>	<u>1,862,182</u>	<u>534,073</u>
Newspapers—Delivered	7,357,473	7,228,663	
Posted	5,955,626	5,019,380	
	<u>13,313,099</u>	<u>12,248,043</u>	<u>1,065,056</u>

The letters increased 19·44 per cent.; post cards, 9·92; books and parcels, 28·68; and newspapers, 8·7 per cent.

The number of letters posted by each person was estimated to be 28·97; in 1881 the estimate was 23·89.

The postal revenue for the financial year amounted to £171,998 13s. 11d., an increase of £17,856 10s. 3d., or 11·58 per cent., over the receipts for the year 1881–82.

The expenditure on postal services during the same period was £151,837 16s. 8d., an increase of £7,711 18s. 8d., or 5·35 per cent., over the previous year's disbursements, but £20,160 17s. 3d. less than the revenue for the year.

The value of the services performed for other departments of the Government, for which no payment is made, is estimated at £63,752 16s. 5d., which, added to the £20,160 17s. 3d., the excess of revenue over expenditure, brought up the net earnings of the Post Office for the year to £88,913 13s. 8d.

£102,345 8s. 8d. was collected at post offices, in 16,478 payments, on account of the Property-Tax Department. All game-license fees and fees under the Live Stock and Inspection of Machinery Acts are now wholly collected by post offices.

The letter-carriers' deliveries at Auckland, Christchurch, Oamaru, and Invercargill were further extended; and the deliveries at Wellington, Hokitika, and Kumara increased and extended. A delivery was established at Rāngiora, and the delivery at Featherson was abolished. Deliveries at Hamilton, Cambridge, Hawera, Patea, Masterton, Palmerston North, Temuka, Milton, and Gore (to include a delivery in Gordon) are to be established.

4,123,087 letters, 140,973 post-cards, 160,108 books and parcels, and 1,068,628 newspapers were delivered during the year by the several letter-carriers.