

## REGISTERED LETTERS.

The number of registered articles dealt with in 1902, compared with the numbers in 1890, 1900, and 1901, is shown below:—

Postal Districts.	1890.			1900.			1901.			1902.		
	From Places beyond the Colony.	Registered in the Colony.	Totals.	From Places beyond the Colony.	Registered in the Colony.	Totals.	From Places beyond the Colony.	Registered in the Colony.	Totals.	From Places beyond the Colony.	Registered in the Colony.	Totals.
Auckland ..	7,119	34,398	41,517	18,108	101,533	119,641	18,577	117,891	136,468	18,779	120,739	139,518
Thames ..	130	4,781	4,911	267	19,912	20,179	302	22,768	23,070	297	20,057	20,354
New Plymouth ..	341	3,372	3,713	1,310	16,903	18,213	1,498	18,306	19,804	1,890	19,736	21,626
Gisborne ..	118	2,120	2,238	421	7,193	7,614	421	6,468	6,889	426	6,651	7,077
Napier ..	999	10,911	11,910	1,659	26,685	28,344	1,952	26,404	28,356	1,904	26,282	28,186
Wanganui ..	211	6,060	6,271	2,151	24,980	27,131	2,364	32,707	35,071	2,390	33,212	35,602
Wellington ..	6,129	30,369	36,498	9,513	85,915	95,428	13,595	106,859	120,454	15,953	96,336	112,289
Blenheim ..	92	3,193	3,285	116	6,371	6,487	116	8,071	8,187	372	7,736	8,108
Nelson ..	322	3,430	3,752	644	14,726	15,370	1,018	14,814	15,832	1,220	16,919	18,139
Westport ..	112	3,254	3,366	354	6,974	7,328	880	8,518	9,398	882	8,431	9,313
Greymouth ..	102	8,879	8,981	680	11,606	12,286	602	13,776	14,378	527	7,955	8,482
Hokitika ..	95	2,579	2,674	94	4,344	4,438	503	6,634	7,137	562	6,643	7,205
Christchurch ..	3,659	20,404	24,063	5,404	49,049	54,453	5,690	56,399	62,089	6,430	51,215	57,645
Timaru ..	312	3,551	3,863	1,196	9,973	11,169	1,260	10,736	11,936	1,100	13,174	14,274
Oamaru ..	278	2,505	2,783	120	8,880	9,000	116	7,815	7,931	136	6,094	6,230
Dunedin ..	4,615	19,696	24,311	6,954	44,003	50,957	7,746	53,324	61,070	7,986	53,411	61,397
Invercargill ..	1,740	9,819	11,559	3,352	24,989	28,341	5,107	26,071	31,178	5,580	31,233	36,813
Totals ..	26,374	169,321	195,695	52,343	464,036	516,379	61,747	537,561	599,308	66,434	525,824	592,258

## INLAND MAILS.

The inland mail-service contracts have been performed without serious interruption. A general reletting of contracts for the triennium 1904-6 takes place this year.

The contract for a twice-weekly steamer service between Wanganui and Pipiriki, in addition to that carried on by Messrs. Hatrick and Co., referred to in last year's report as having been let to the Wanganui Settlers' River Steamship Company, was allowed to lapse on the 15th September owing to the company going into liquidation.

On the 28th January last the frequency of the Wanganui River steamer mail-service was increased as far as Pipiriki from twice to five times weekly during the tourist season, and once to twice weekly during the remainder of the year. The contract entered into between the Postmaster-General and Messrs. Hatrick and Co. in 1896 was, in so far as it related to the service between Wanganui and Pipiriki, terminated on that date, a new contract being entered into between the Department of Industries and Commerce and the company.

A further extension of the railway travelling post-office in the Auckland district is to take place immediately. Under the new arrangement sorting-vans will be run through from Auckland to Thames, and *vice versa*. This will materially relieve the work of the Chief Post-office, by throwing the distribution of a large quantity of mail-matter on the travelling post-office and reducing the number of small mails hitherto made up at Auckland.

The number of contracts for inland mails in operation in 1902 was 685.

There were in addition 452 services not under bond.

The length of inland postal routes by road (counted one way only) was 10,562 miles, and the total number of miles travelled 2,645,407, at an average cost of 3·38d. per mile. In 1901 the respective mileages were 10,310 miles and 2,518,094, at an average cost of 3·37d. per mile.

Ordinary railway-trains with mails travelled 3,272,855 miles.

The estimated sum payable to the Railway Department for the conveyance of mails by ordinary trains was £43,012 12s.

## SAN FRANCISCO MAIL-SERVICE.

The authority the House of Representatives gave Government to renew for eighteen months the arrangement with the J. D. Spreckels and Bros. Company for the performance of the San Francisco mail-service expired with May of the present year. Temporary provision has been made to continue the service until the House has had an opportunity of considering the question of renewal. There have been no serious delays for which the contractors could be charged, but the vexation is still experienced of a few hours' late arrival of the steamer at San Francisco with the Homeward mails being followed by a late arrival of days in London. Delays on the Atlantic and with the United States railway services have been responsible for a number of late deliveries at Auckland.

A contract dated the 30th June, 1902, embodied generally the decision of the House of Representatives, and made the usual provisions for safeguarding the interests of the colony in so far as the sailings from New Zealand were concerned. Clause 9 of the contract was the subject of considerable discussion: the Government, being desirous of obtaining the maximum delay of the vessels in San Francisco to await the arrival of the English mails, contended for a detention of ninety-six hours, as provided in previous contracts. Ultimately the period was fixed at seventy-two hours, subject to the consent of the United States Government, which alone could sanction such an arrangement. This was given. It is not, however, expected that the period of seventy-two hours will need to be availed of in holding a vessel for the mails.