

The expenditure was £228,367 Os. 7d., as against £212,415 11s. for the previous year—an increase of £15,951 9s. 7d., or 7·51 per cent.

There was 7,749 miles of line and 22,672 miles of wire at the close of the year—an increase of 280 and 967 miles respectively.

The net expenditure out of Public Works Fund for telegraph extension was £68,578 7s. 8d., as compared with £31,728 16s. 2d. in 1901-2.

The number of private wires and subsidised lines was 360, compared with 365 in 1901-2. The amount received for rent, maintenance, &c., was £1,967 3s. 8d., as against £1,959 19s. in 1901-2.

The total number of telegraph and telephone offices open at the close of the year was 1,103. Of these, 260 were telegraph-offices and 843 telephone-offices.

The number of telegrams of all codes forwarded during last financial year was 4,559,304—an increase of 391,323, or 9·39 per cent., over 1901-2.

The proportion of paid telegrams per head of population was 5·32, and 5·33 the previous year.

The number of ordinary telegrams forwarded was 3,341,813, of the value of £115,896 8s. 7d., compared with 3,046,421 for £107,633 2s. 10d. in 1901-2—an increase of 295,392 and £8,263 5s. 9d.

The average value of each ordinary telegram was 8·32d., and of urgent telegrams, 1s. 3·60d.

The urgent telegrams numbered 183,412, of the value of £11,919 8s. 11d.—an increase of 18,871 in number and £1,006 6s. 2d. in amount.

374,045 press telegrams, of the value of £14,750 3s. 11d., were forwarded in 1902-3, as compared with 328,405, valued at £13,878 17s. 1d., forwarded in 1901-2—an increase of 45,640, or 13·9 per cent. in number and 6·28 per cent. in value.

The value of each press telegram averaged 9·46d., as against 10·14d. in 1901-2.

The bureau messages numbered 371,948, of the value of £10,772 1s. 9d., as compared with 311,024, of the value of £9,195 9s. 4d.—an increase of 60,924 in number and £1,576 12s. 5d. in amount.

The average value of each bureau message was 6·95d. as against 7·09d. in 1901-2.

It will thus be seen that all classes of paid telegrams show a substantial increase.

The number of Government telegrams forwarded was 288,086, valued at £26,440 2s. 10d., as compared with 317,590, of the value of £27,507 17s. 6d.—a decrease of 29,504 in number and of £1,067 14s. 8d. in amount.

49,230 money-orders for £152,407 14s. were transmitted by telegraph as against 46,570 for £147,524 14s. 9d. in 1901-2—an increase of 2,660 telegrams.

The number of paid forwarded telegrams to every hundred letters posted in New Zealand for delivery within the colony was 8·02, as against 7·96 in 1901-2.

#### TELEGRAPH MESSENGERS' DELIVERIES.

Telegraph messengers' deliveries (by Departmental messenger) were established as follows: Auckland—Warkworth. Christchurch—Doyleston, Hammer Springs, Leeston, Little River. New Plymouth—Tariki, Toko. Thames—Karangahake, Whakatane. Wellington—Halcombe, Sanson.

#### OFFICES OPENED and CLOSED during Financial Year ended 31st March, 1903.

##### Opened.

|                 |                    |                |                  |
|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Aburoa.         | Hopai.             | Newton Flat.   | Tane.            |
| Ararimu South.  | Horeke.            | Okaramio.      | Te Kao.          |
| Ardmore.        | Huiakama.          | Okoia.         | Te Kiri.         |
| Ataahua.        | Hurunui.           | Onewhero.      | The Forks.       |
| Awaroa.         | Ida Valley.        | Otama.         | Trentham.        |
| Awhitu Central. | Inaha.             | Otamatea.      | Tiniroto.        |
| Castlecliff.    | Kenepuru Heads.    | Papatawa.      | Titahi Bay.      |
| Closeburn.      | Komata.            | Portage.       | Turangarere.     |
| Cowes.          | Lauriston.         | Pukekou.       | Victoria Valley. |
| East Cape.      | Lichfield Street.  | Putiki.        | Waerenga.        |
| East Taieri.    | Mahau.             | Pyramid.       | Waimaha.         |
| Fairburn's.     | Maheno Bureau.     | Raupo.         | Waione.          |
| Fernhill.       | Maitland.          | Richmond Hill. | Waitaria.        |
| Gibbston.       | Manaroa.           | Rongomai.      | Waitiri.         |
| Golden Downs.   | Mangotoro.         | St. Helen's.   | Waiwera Hotel.   |
| Greenpark.      | Matapu.            | Scargill.      | Wendonside.      |
| Half Moon Bay.  | Motupipi.          | Scott's Gap.   | Westerfield.     |
| Hatuma.         | Naumai.            | Silverstream.  |                  |
| Hilton.         | Nelson Lighthouse. | Swanson.       |                  |

##### Closed.

|                    |               |            |            |
|--------------------|---------------|------------|------------|
| Bullendale.        | Ruapekapeka.  | Tahekeroa. | Te Moehau. |
| Mokihinui Mine.    | Poro-o-Tarao. | Te Ahuahu. | Tiniroto.  |
| Nelson Lighthouse. |               |            |            |

Opened during year, 74; closed, 9.

#### ELECTRIC POWER AND LIGHTING.

During the year the Department, as representing the Board of Control under "The Tramways Act, 1894," has had to deal with Orders in Council for the construction of tramways in Auckland, Wellington, and Dunedin.

Applications for licenses under "The Electric Lines Act, 1884," for the electric lighting of boroughs have been received from Gore, Hawera, Bluff, Christchurch, &c. Some of these involve transmission lines for considerable distances at voltages from 5,000 upwards, and entail considerable