transaction. The figures for 1891 have already been given when describing the general prosperity of Wellington.

In the year 1865 the seat of Government was removed to Wellington, which more than doubled the work of the office in all its branches. In consequence of the important additions to the district duties, a third clerk, J. Hoggard, was appointed in January 1864, and a fourth, Mr Morrow, in the same month of 1866, and in December 1869 there were employed altogether 1 chief postmaster, 4 clerks, 2 letter carriers, and 1 messenger. Prior to July 1855, when postage stamps were introduced, all letters, papers, etc., were prepaid in money, the amount collected being marked on each article in red ink. Prepayment of inland letters, however, was optional until 1862.

Mail communication was, as has been said, kept up between Wellington and the Hutt from the first, and this soon developed into a daily mail, probably extended to the Taita after the native troubles in 1848. In 1848-49 a weekly overland mail by horse was established with Wanganui (subsequently extended to New Plymouth), and this service, varied to meet the increasing requirements of the settlers, went on uninterruptedly either by horse or coach, until replaced by the Railway. The same remark applies equally to officers in the Wairarapa district, with which mail communication was opened up a year or two later.

In 1860 the service overland to New Plymouth by horse was terminated in consequence of native troubles, and owing to the same cause the weekly service which occupied a fortnight in transit between Wellington and Auckland, via New Plymouth, also ceased.

In 1841 and for some years afterwards mails were conveyed at irregular intervals between Auckland and Wellington by the Government brig Victoria, Captain Deck, but it frequently happened that mails were received via Sydney at Wellington, and in 1848, when Dunedin was established, mails were frequently received at Wellington from thence either *via* Sydney or Melbourne.

Very soon after Wellington came into existence, schooners such as the William Alfred, Cheetah, etc., commenced to ply between that place and Sydney, and these, together with the sailing vessels constantly arriving from England, kept the settlers in touch with the outer world.

In 1856 the passing of the 'Local Posts Act,' empowering superintendents of provinces to levy rates, caused the Provincial authorities to take a certain amount of interest in postal matters, and in that year Dr. Featherstone, superintendent, arranged with the owners of the schooner Marchioness and the brigantine Active, then running between Wellington and Melbourne, to leave the latter port monthly on the arrival of the European and Australian Company's steamers with European mails, and convey a mail back for Europe to be forwarded by the following month's steamer. The subsidy paid was either £1,200 or £1,500 a year.

This arrangement was superseded at the end of 1858 by one made by the Department with four steamers, the Lord Worsley, Lord Ashley, Airedale, and Prince Alfred, to convey mails between New Zealand and Australia and between Auckland and Dunedin for a subsidy of £24,000 a year, £14,000 of which was paid by the Imperial Government. The White Swan was at the same time engaged to keep up regular communication between Dunedin, Wellington, Manukau, and Auckland for £6,000. From this time forward there was a continuous and marked improvement in the means for conveying mails by sea, and in 1862-63 steam subsidies cost the colony £65,300.

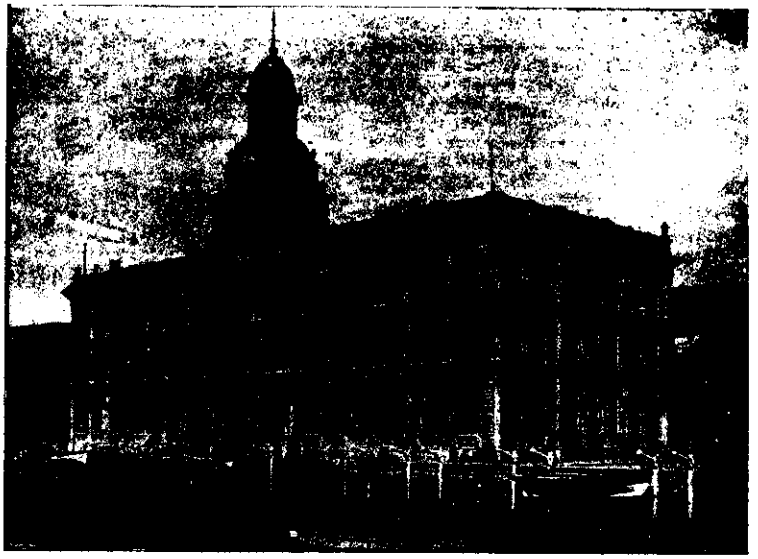
In 1857 the course of post was from London to Melbourne 54 days, to Sydney 57 days, and allowing 10 days for the journey to Wellington would make the time occupied between London and Wellington either 64 or 67 days. In 1866 the service to London, via Panama, began and continued in operation until 1868. Soon after its discontinuance the service to San Francisco was inaugurated and still exists.

The first mercantile screw steamer to enter Wellington Harbour was the Ann. She arrived from Sydney, via Nelson, on 3rd September, 1853, and sailed for Lyttelton. In June, 1854, the Nelson began running from Manukau to Lyttelton, via intermediate ports, but she was recalled to England because this service did not pay. The Zingari, Tasmanian Maid, Wonga Wonga, and Storm Bird, were, however, soon plying on the coast; and from that time onwards the boats have been increasing and improving in speed, and have finally culminated in the magnificent fleet of the Union Company, and the new vessels of the Huddart-Parker line.

In conclusion of this week's instalment a word on our portraits. Mr Hoggard, were he known for no other reason, would be famous for his father's sake, but indeed he does not depend on that, and is one of the most faithful and energetic officers in the department. Mr Hoggard joined the service in January, 1864, and in 1871 was made Chief Clerk of the Hokitika Post Office. In 1874 he was promoted to the position of Chief Clerk at Wellington.

Mr George Gray joined as a clerk in the Telegraph Department on July 24th, 1857. He was appointed senior clerk, accountant's branch, General Post Office, January 1st, 1881, and Controller Money Order and Savings' Bank and Accountant, General Post Office, July 1st, 1891.

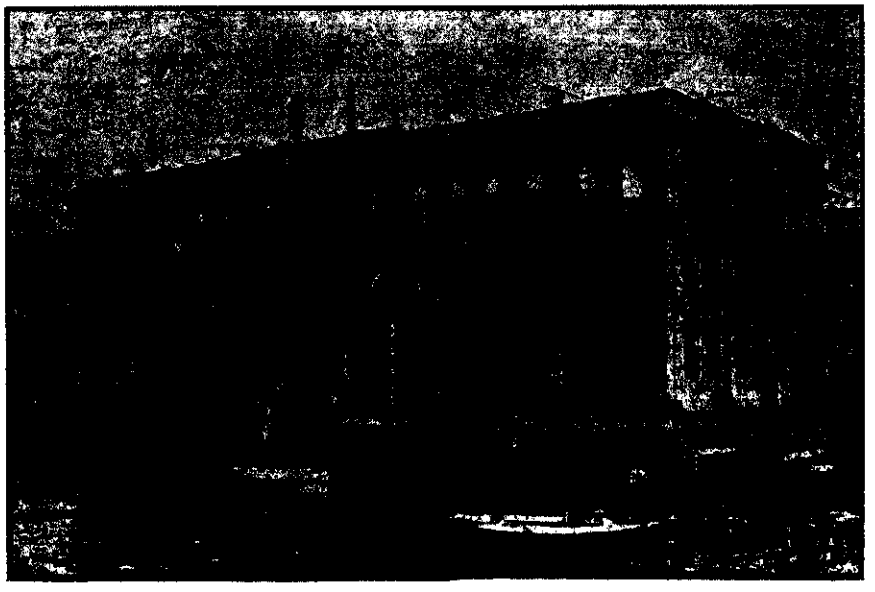
Mr R. J. Goodman, who until quite recently was at Wellington, joined the service as a clerk in the Christchurch Post Office in 1863. He was made agent on the Panama service till it terminated, when he took up the duties of chief Money Order and Savings Bank clerk in Dunedin. He subsequently held the post of chief clerk at the post offices of Dunedin, Christchurch, and Nelson. He was appointed chief clerk, General Post Office, Wellington, May 1st, 1881. (Since this was in print Mr Goodman has been promoted to be Chief Postmaster at Timaru.)



THE PRESENT WELLINGTON POST OFFICE.

Mr John Grubb entered the service as stamp clerk at Dunedin on the 1st of August, 1863. In August, 1866, he was appointed Postmaster and Telegraphist at Clyde, Otago. In November, 1868, he was made chief clerk, and afterwards Sub-Commissioner of Annuities at Christchurch; besides being for some time the Acting Chief Postmaster. In October, 1871, he was appointed chief clerk at Chief Post Office, Wellington. On the initiation of the Government Life Insurance system, at the request of the Hon. Mr Gisborne, the then Commissioner, he travelled for a time making known the benefits of the national system of life insurance. In 1873 he was appointed Chief Postmaster at Napier; and in December, 1885, Assistant Inspector of Post Offices.

(TO BE CONTINUED).



AFTER THE FIRE, 1887.

STRANGE NAUTICAL CUSTOMS.

THE custom of having an old broom attached to the masthead of a ship for sale or hire originated, according to Brand, from the ancient practice of putting up boughs upon anything that was intended for sale. It has been contended, however, that the custom dates from the period when Van Tromp and the Dutch fleet hoisted a broom indicative of an intention to sweep the ships of Britain from the seas. To repel the insolence the British Admiral exhibited a horsewhip, equally significant of his intention toward the Dutch. The pennant which the horsewhip symbolised has ever since been the distinguishing mark of British men-of-war. A game formerly practised on board ship was called 'hoop.' To run the hoop was an ancient maritime custom. Four or more boys, naked to the waist, having their left hands tied fast to an iron hoop and in their right hand a rope called a 'nettle,' waited the signal to begin. This was given by a stroke of the cat-o'-nine tails administered by the boatswain to the back of one of the boys, who struck at the next to him, and so on, until all became engaged in what can scarcely be called an amusing game; for although the blows were at first gently administered, each boy, irritated at the strokes of his neighbour, at length laid on lustily, and the play became earnest. This custom was practised when a ship was windbound. This boy-flogging brings to mind a practice of the French seamen in former days, who believed that the spirit of the storm would be propitiated by thrashing unfortunate middies at the mainmast. 'Cob,' or 'cobbling,' was a punishment formerly inflicted on seamen for petty offences and irregularities. This consisted in striking the offender with a cobbing-stick or pipe-staff. The number of strokes was usually a dozen. At the first stroke the inflictor repeated the word 'watch,' on which all the persons on board took off their hats on pain of like punishment. The last stroke was given as hard as possible and was called the 'purse.' 'Keel-hauling' was a barbarous punishment in the navy; but the following account of a 'keel-raking' was a refinement on such cruelty. It is described in 'Six Dialogues about Sea Service (1685).' If the offence be foul, he (the seaman) is also drawn underneath the very keel of the ship, and thus being under water a great piece is given to fire right over his head as well as to astonish him more with the thunder thereof, which proveth much offensive to him, as to give warning to others to look out and beware.