

FRANKING.

The recommendations of the Postal Committee of 1866, in favour of the abolition of the system of franking, have been very carefully considered by myself and the permanent officers of the Department. The result has been, that while the necessity for having all official correspondence paid by Postage Stamps, would, together with the keeping of the necessary accounts, involve a considerable addition to the labour of the several Departments, no plan for the issue and use of stamps for this purpose has yet been devised which would not be as much open to abuse as the limited system of franking which is now permitted. It has been therefore considered desirable to continue, at least for the present, the system now in operation. The system of paying the postage on official correspondence by postage stamps has been tried in Victoria; the result was so unsatisfactory that the system has been discontinued.

DEAD LETTERS.

During the year 46,172 letters, including 521 registered letters, were received at the Dead Letter Office. Of these 37,117, including 504 registered, were despatched from the office. Nearly 100 letters were delivered to personal applicants, and about 9,000 were destroyed, as neither the writers nor the persons to whom they were addressed could be found. 22,750 of the above total, including 227 registered letters, originating in New Zealand, were opened in the Dead Letter Office, and returned to the writers. And 14,367, including 267 registered letters, originating in places beyond the Colony, were returned to the several offices from whence they were forwarded to this Colony.

The following Return will show the property found in the dead letters dealt with during the year:—

	£	s.	d.
Bills of Exchange	5,642	4	4
Bank Notes	168	0	0
Money Orders	177	13	4
Acceptances, Promissory Notes, &c.	1,516	13	4
Cheques	190	6	11
Coin	4	17	0
Postage Stamps	1	16	2
Orders	56	9	7
Bank Receipts	55	17	6
Warrants	8	15	0
Gold Dust, two packets.			
Gold Rings, three.			
	£7,822	12	10

The following is a Return of the property claimed and returned during the year:—

	£	s.	d.
Bills of Exchange	1,460	7	10
Bank Notes	56	0	0
Money Orders	126	11	0
Acceptances, &c.	1,365	4	3
Cheques	59	3	10
Postage Stamps	0	12	0
Orders and Coin	9	5	7
Bank Receipts	41	0	0
Warrants	8	15	0
Half Notes and Land Orders, one packet.			
Gold Dust, one packet.			
Gold Rings, one.			
	£3,126	19	3

REGISTERED LETTERS.

The following comparative Return of the number of letters registered in New Zealand during the years 1865 and 1866 respectively, shows a considerable addition to the number of letters which are so treated. This is chiefly to be attributed to the influx of population on the West Coast Gold Fields; but independently of this, the Return shows an increased disposition on the part of the public to adopt such reasonable precautions when sending articles of value through the Post as persons of ordinary prudence ought not to neglect.

RETURN of the Number of LETTERS REGISTERED at the various Post Offices in the different Provinces in NEW ZEALAND, during the Years 1865 and 1866.

PROVINCES.	1865.			1866.		
	To Places without the Colony.	To Places within the Colony.	TOTALS.	To Places without the Colony.	To Places within the Colony.	TOTALS.
Auckland	1,806	3,702	5,508	1,309	5,190	6,499
Taranaki	278	329	607	232	327	559
Hawke's Bay	122	297	419	165	363	528
Wellington	631	1,775	2,406	988	2,604	3,592
Nelson	419	1,035	1,454	572	841	1,413
Marlborough	225	1,076	1,301	170	565	735
Canterbury	2,608	3,936	6,544	6,217	6,302	12,519
Otago	3,772	5,016	8,788	2,960	5,711	8,671
Southland	479	479	958	329	483	812
TOTALS	10,340	17,645	27,985	12,942	22,386	35,328