

The amount paid for the carriage of mails by unsubsidised vessels was £5,729 5s. 9½d.

3,459 private boxes were let, which, with the fees on 288 private bags, produced a revenue of £4,019 5s.

FREE OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

The estimated value of the official or free correspondence for the year is given in the statement underneath:—

Postal Districts.	Letters.	Books.	Value.	Postal Districts.	Letters.	Books.	Value.
	lb. oz.	lb. oz.	£ s. d.		lb. oz.	lb. oz.	£ s. d.
Auckland ..	23,486 8	16,063 14	6,970 9 4	Hokitika ..	1,991 8	850 0	559 8 0
Thames ..	1,501 12	2,126 0	473 11 8	Blenheim ..	1,837 0	4,784 0	654 6 8
Gisborne ..	1,003 0	1,107 0	304 7 4	Christchurch ..	8,589 0	12,472 0	2,766 2 8
New Plymouth ..	2,379 9	1,800 0	721 2 3	Timaru ..	3,143 0	2,110 0	910 16 10
Napier ..	2,327 7	5,096 0	950 10 4	Oamaru ..	1,445 7	1,875 0	447 19 0
Wanganui ..	6,127 1	5,595 0	1,825 11 5	Dunedin ..	8,136 6	10,514 4	2,570 8 6
Wellington ..	140,835 11	256,031 0	49,972 13 11	Invercargill ..	3,154 15	2,153 2	913 18 0
Nelson ..	3,730 2	2,620 0	1,091 15 8				
Westport ..	1,382 1	917 8	399 2 8	Totals ..	213,373 12	327,281 10	71,965 6 6
Greymouth ..	1,703 5	1,166 14	493 2 3				

The estimated value of the free correspondence for 1886 was £75,606 11s. 11d.

REGISTERED LETTERS.

The number of registered letters dealt with, compared with the numbers in 1884, 1885, and 1886, is shown below:—

Postal Districts.	1884.			1885.			1886.			1887.		
	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 ..	5,803	19,852	25,655	5,890	22,124	28,014	5,346	18,702	24,048	5,996	22,743	28,739
Thames ..	217	2,913	3,130	205	2,879	3,084	212	3,850	4,062	149	2,613	2,762
New Plymouth ..	560	3,266	3,826	675	2,876	3,551	551	2,675	3,226	343	2,653	2,996
Gisborne ..	141	903	1,044	108	922	1,030	111	1,133	1,244	81	1,736	1,817
Napier ..	1,037	4,518	5,555	892	5,453	6,345	934	6,769	7,703	992	6,831	7,823
Wanganui ..	316	4,898	5,214	233	4,500	4,733	185	5,081	5,266	183	3,980	4,163
Wellington ..	3,654	18,250	21,904	4,757	19,218	23,975	4,452	20,942	25,394	5,581	22,148	27,729
Nelson ..	969	3,065	4,034	559	2,432	2,991	326	2,410	2,736	349	2,944	3,293
Westport ..	61	1,290	1,351	45	1,438	1,483	66	2,105	2,171	39	2,318	2,357
Greymouth ..	133	1,911	2,044	125	2,835	2,960	159	3,126	3,285	88	5,636	5,724
Hokitika ..	185	1,333	1,518	173	1,907	2,080	177	2,014	2,191	162	1,726	1,888
Blenheim ..	112	1,397	1,509	181	1,413	1,594	112	1,421	1,533	113	1,514	1,627
Christchurch ..	4,429	17,297	21,726	3,717	13,678	17,395	4,048	13,825	17,873	3,603	15,169	18,772
Timaru ..	341	3,311	3,652	440	3,153	3,593	512	2,942	3,454	405	2,727	3,132
Oamaru ..	228	1,638	1,866	316	1,947	2,263	324	2,048	2,372	256	2,356	2,612
Dunedin ..	4,677	12,192	16,869	5,645	12,737	18,382	6,103	13,069	19,177	4,172	14,760	18,932
Invercargill ..	1,456	7,649	9,105	1,614	6,661	8,275	1,729	8,040	9,769	851	7,035	7,886
Totals ..	24,319	105,683	130,002	25,625	106,173	131,798	25,352	110,152	135,504	23,363	118,889	142,252

The number of unregistered letters detected with money enclosures and compulsorily registered is largely on the increase, notwithstanding the repeated cautions given the public against sending money-letters through the post unless registered. In the hope of more effectually checking the evil, it is the intention to consider the advisableness of reducing the registration fee.

DEAD LETTERS.

The number of unclaimed letters received and disposed of during the under-mentioned years is shown in the following table:—

Manner of Disposal.	1880.	1881.	1882.	1883.	1884.	1885.	1886.	1887.
Opened and returned to the writers ..	60,977	52,038	53,507	69,452	68,942	66,592	66,729	62,847
Returned unopened to other countries ..	10,503	9,372	8,539	8,143	9,134	8,115	8,359	7,287
Reissued	240	159	54	67	107	185	251	96
Destroyed	5,135	3,969	6,189	3,302	3,986	2,872	6,600	5,974
Returned unopened by Chief Post-masters	11,160	12,810	14,378	15,833	17,593	19,187	21,144	20,185
Totals	88,015	78,348	82,667	96,797	99,762	96,951	103,083	96,389

The unclaimed letters dealt with show a decrease of 6·49 per cent. compared with the number disposed of in the previous year.

18,097 book-packets and circulars were returned to foreign countries, 11,941 were returned to