

The estimated weight was over 227 tons. The estimated value of the free correspondence for 1890 was £67,473 17s. 1d.

REGISTERED LETTERS.

The number of registered letters dealt with in 1891, compared with the numbers in 1885, 1888, and 1890, is shown below:—

Postal Districts.	1885.			1888.			1890.			1891.		
	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 ..	5,890	22,124	28,014	7,485	25,205	32,690	7,119	34,398	41,517	7,797	40,807	48,604
Thames ..	205	2,879	3,084	169	2,729	2,898	130	4,781	4,911	165	4,552	4,717
New Plymouth ..	675	2,876	3,551	331	2,544	2,875	341	3,372	3,713	381	3,953	4,334
Gisborne ..	108	922	1,030	106	1,513	1,619	118	2,120	2,238	132	2,428	2,560
Napier ..	892	5,453	6,345	1,008	6,690	7,698	999	10,911	11,910	1,053	12,627	13,680
Wanganui ..	233	4,500	4,733	207	3,988	4,195	211	6,060	6,271	306	7,030	7,336
Wellington ..	4,757	19,218	23,975	5,138	23,036	28,174	6,129	30,363	36,498	7,492	36,491	43,983
Nelson ..	559	2,432	2,991	367	2,592	2,959	322	3,430	3,752	392	4,314	4,706
Westport ..	45	1,438	1,483	73	2,492	2,565	112	3,254	3,366	90	3,434	3,524
Greymouth ..	125	2,835	2,960	157	6,258	6,415	102	8,879	8,981	235	10,436	10,671
Hokitika ..	173	1,907	2,080	190	2,331	2,521	95	2,579	2,674	76	2,624	2,700
Blenheim ..	181	1,413	1,594	159	1,808	1,967	92	3,193	3,285	125	3,262	3,387
Christchurch ..	3,717	13,678	17,395	4,161	16,250	20,411	3,659	20,404	24,063	4,292	21,956	26,248
Timaru ..	440	3,153	3,593	451	2,757	3,208	312	3,551	3,563	380	3,740	4,120
Oamaru ..	316	1,947	2,263	353	2,230	2,583	278	2,505	2,783	293	2,048	2,341
Dunedin ..	5,645	12,737	18,382	4,498	13,679	18,177	4,615	19,696	24,311	4,782	19,762	24,544
Invercargill ..	1,614	6,661	8,275	1,445	7,915	9,360	1,740	9,819	11,559	2,031	10,708	12,739
Totals ..	25,625	106,173	131,798	26,298	124,017	150,315	26,374	169,321	195,695	30,022	190,172	220,194

The registered-letter fee was reduced from 6d. to 3d. in 1889.

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.	1882.	1883.	1884.	1885.	1886.	1887.	1888.	1889.	1890.	1891.
Opened and returned to the writers ..	53,507	69,452	68,942	66,592	66,729	62,847	55,118	62,654	60,540	60,245
Returned unopened to other countries ..	8,539	8,143	9,134	8,115	8,359	7,287	6,892	6,220	7,779	6,930
Reissued ..	54	67	107	185	251	96	88	92	141	158
Destroyed ..	6,189	3,302	3,986	2,872	6,600	5,974	5,246	4,340	2,660	2,090
Returned unopened by Chief Postmasters ..	14,378	15,893	17,593	19,187	21,144	20,185	19,963	21,164	21,931	18,713
Totals ..	82,667	96,797	99,762	96,951	103,083	96,389	87,307	94,470	93,051	88,136

The unclaimed letters dealt with show a decrease of 5·28 per cent., compared with the number disposed of the previous year.

The proportion of dead or unclaimed letters to the total number of letters posted in the colony was 0·37 per cent.

The number of missing-letter inquiries to the total number of letters posted was in the proportion of 1 to 17,358.

37,099 book-packets and circulars were returned to foreign countries, 11,161 were returned to the senders through the Dead Letter Office, 5 were reissued, and 13,502 were returned by Chief Postmasters: a total of 61,767 book-packets and circulars, against 64,903 in 1890. 1,668 newspapers were returned to the publishers as unclaimed.

The under-mentioned articles of value were found enclosed in letters opened in the Dead Letter Office, and returned to the senders where practicable:—

	£	s.	d.
160 post-office orders ..	...	...	...
39 bank drafts ..	...	...	...
112 cheques ..	...	...	...
1 dividend warrant ..	...	...	...
14 promissory notes ..	...	...	...
Postal-notes ..	...	...	...
Stamps ..	...	...	...
Bank-notes ..	...	...	...
Gold ..	...	...	...
Silver and copper ..	...	...	...
Representing a total of ..	...	...	...
	£6,512	18	6