

OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

The estimated volume and value of official and other free correspondence posted during 1901 is given in the statement below :—

District.	Letters.	Packets.	Registered Articles.	Newspapers.
Auckland	333,370	33,735	12,164	67,114
Thames	75,439	2,851	1,702	33,332
New Plymouth	108,747	15,000	1,850	33,570
Gisborne	31,884	3,468	660	17,868
Napier	120,116	9,596	2,310	54,750
Wanganui	262,197	6,034	7,518	90,970
Wellington	1,428,034	328,798	31,916	242,043
Nelson	109,109	6,825	5,481	40,560
Westport	35,828	440	1,443	29,224
Greymouth	57,772	3,214	3,026	46,085
Hokitika	18,780	2,688	1,981	27,231
Blenheim	66,001	2,964	720	24,756
Christchurch	450,982	26,692	13,800	144,450
Timaru	97,461	3,750	3,194	32,000
Oamaru	51,064	2,080	1,420	34,164
Dunedin	383,256	49,844	9,500	194,664
Invercargill	239,174	18,616	4,180	79,092
Totals	3,869,264	516,595	102,865	1,191,873

The estimated value of official correspondence was £62,142.

DEAD LETTERS.

The following comparative table shows the number of unclaimed letters, letter-cards, and post-cards dealt with during the undermentioned years :—

Manner of Disposal.	1884.	1885.	1886.	1887.	1889.	1890.	1894.	1896.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.
Opened and returned to the writers	68,942	66,592	66,729	62,847	62,654	60,540	61,745	63,112	68,872	74,132	76,692	100,036
Returned unopened to other countries	9,134	8,115	8,359	7,287	6,220	7,779	8,941	7,546	8,899	9,706	9,707	12,251
Reissued	107	185	251	96	92	141	130	148	219	178	265	*5,112
Destroyed	3,986	2,872	6,600	5,974	4,340	2,660	4,725	4,069	3,368	4,536	4,900	5,705
Returned unopened by Chief Postmasters	17,593	19,187	21,144	20,185	21,164	21,931	22,042	26,414	33,273	22,915	40,282	44,523
Totals ..	99,762	96,951	103,083	96,389	94,470	93,051	97,583	101,289	114,631	111,467	131,846	167,627

* Including 4,911 troopers' letters.

The proportion of dead or unclaimed letters, letter-cards, and post-cards to the total number dealt with in the colony was 0·31 per cent., as against 0·34 per cent. in 1900.

24,678 book-packets and circulars were returned to foreign countries; 35,734 were returned to senders through the Dead-letter Office; 46,456 were returned by Chief Postmasters: a total of 106,868 book-packets and circulars, as compared with 123,294 in 1900.

481 letters were wrongly addressed; 29 letters were discovered to have been posted with previously used stamps; 2,106 unclaimed registered letters were dealt with.

2,518 newspapers and 1,386 books and other articles without addresses were received, many of which were subsequently applied for and delivered.

1,951 newspapers were returned to the publishers.

435 letters and 142 letter-cards were posted without addresses.

8 letters with libellous addresses were intercepted.

The undermentioned articles of value were found in letters opened in the Dead-letter Office, and returned to senders where practicable :—

	£	s.	d.
347 post-office orders	...	959	10 3
31 bank drafts	...	2,144	8 6
225 cheques	...	1,954	17 3
2 dividend warrants	...	6	12 0
4 promissory notes	...	43	8 3
Postal notes	...	93	9 6
Stamps	...	21	18 2
Bank-notes	...	191	0 0
Gold	...	43	0 0
Silver and copper	...	7	1 8

Representing a total of £5,465 5 7

In addition, 1 ladies' gold watch and chain, 3 silver watches, 1 silver watch and chain, 1 silver keyless watch, 2 keyless metal watches, 2 metal watches, 1 metal watch and clasp, 1 Waterbury watch, 1 gold-mounted silk watch-guard, 1 rolled-gold chain, 1 gold watch-chain bar, 4 silver chains, 2 pairs gold sleeve-links, 1 pair greenstone links, 2 gold scarf-pins, 1 ladies' gold scarf-pin, 1 ladies' gold tie-clip, 5 gold rings, 5 gold brooches, 6 silver brooches, 3 brooches, 3 gold-mounted greenstone brooches, 5 greenstone brooches, 1 pair gold-mounted greenstone